

IN THESE TIMES

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LET
REAGAN
BE
NIXON

n February 1,

just three days after Ronald Reagan announced that he would seek re-election in 1984, a 10-page, double-spaced, xeroxed memorandum—the faint imprint of the White House seal still visible—arrived in the mail at IN THESE TIMES' Chicago office.

The memorandum, titled "Let Reagan Be Nixon," is an analysis of Reagan's prospects in the 1984 election.

References in the text to what Reagan had said in his January 16 speech and would say in his January 25 State of the Union address suggest the memo was written sometime between these two dates. Its author or authors are not indicated, but presumably it was written by the White House political staff or the Reagan-Bush campaign. The memo's authenticity remains in doubt since our attempts to find its source have been unsuccessful to date. Yet we believe its contents are sufficiently interesting to justify printing it in IN THESE TIMES. We leave our readers, however, with this warning: you should approach it with the same skepticism that we do.

—James Weinstein
editor

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Reagan's NLRB turns back clock

By Joan Walsh

CHICAGO

The same week President Reagan unofficially launched his reelection campaign with his euphoric State of the Union address, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a State of the Unions message of sorts: three anti-labor decisions that prove it won't take another term for the president's controversial, pro-management NLRB to have its impact on federal labor policy.

Two of the rulings increased the role of private arbitrators in settling labor disputes, accomplishing the board's stated intent to ease up on industry by removing itself from many labor-management disputes. But the most important decision, its long-awaited *Milwaukee Spring* ruling, placed the Reagan board squarely on the side of management—and reversed a prior board decision to do it. If the decision stands, labor attorneys say it could make union contracts "meaningless."

In *Milwaukee Spring*, management confronted the United Auto Workers (UAW) with an increasingly common choice: agree to wage concessions in mid-contract or lose your jobs. The Milwaukee Spring division of Illinois Coil Spring Company was the firm's only union facility. Wages were about 70 percent higher there than at its McHenry, Ill., division, and Illinois Coil managers proposed bringing them down to the McHenry rate, or moving its valve assembly operations from Milwaukee to McHenry, costing 35 employees their jobs. When the union refused the mid-contract concessions in April 1982, Milwaukee Spring began planning the assembly move.

The UAW immediately charged Milwaukee Spring with violating National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) prohibitions against changes in the terms of a labor agreement before that agreement has expired. In October 1982, the three-member board—including unconfirmed Reagan appointee John Van De Water, later rejected by Congress—unanimously backed the UAW. Milwaukee Spring, the board ruled, was relocating its assembly work "solely because of the comparatively higher labor costs under [its union] agreement," and thus was breaking the contract.

Precedent existed for the *Milwaukee Spring* decision. A Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision had backed the board in a similar case, *Los Angeles Marine*, in which a firm had relocated part of its operations from a union to a non-union plant in mid-contract to reduce its labor costs. Mid-contract relocation in order to lower wages, the court found, "would allow an employer to do indirectly what cannot be done directly under the Act"—break the contract.

That reasoning was convincing enough for district courts to grant unions injunctions to stop mid-contract relocations. And while the *Milwaukee Spring* decision had been appealed to the Seventh Circuit, the union was reasonably confident the board

bargaining responsibility it may have. But the union rejected the proposal as an attempt at modifying its contract in midterm, a violation of NLRA Section 8(d). "It is not federal labor policy to encourage midterm bargaining," says UAW attorney Michael Nicholson. "You can't force unions to reopen negotiations in mid contract."

Ironically, NLRA Section 8(d) was once considered an anti-labor measure. It was written into law with the post-World War II Taft-Hartley Act, when unions were emerging from war-time acquiescence to more militant demands. Its provision that collective bargaining requirements "shall not be construed as requiring either party to discuss or agree to any modification of...a contract for a fixed period" was an attempt to rein in the labor movement, which was pressing for mid-contract raises with strikes and other work actions. Says Nicholson: "The issue is whether Taft-Hartley applies to corporations as well as unions."

Labor attorneys say *Milwaukee Spring* won't necessarily mean companies will bolt to non-union territory. Right now, courts allow plant closings and relocations for so many reasons, "an intelligent employer with good counsel and loose morals can move a plant" without admitting its motive is avoiding union wages, says Ross Eisenbrey, labor counsel to Michigan Democrat William Ford, who serves on the House labor-management subcommittee. *Milwaukee Spring* "will be more useful as blackmail," he predicts. "A company can tell a union, 'If you don't cut your wage rates, we're going to go.'"

THIS IS A TIME OF DIFFICULT CHANGES IN OUR ECONOMY...

AND THESE CHANGES CALL FOR A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LABOR



I AM THEREFORE PREPARED TO MAKE YOU THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITION—

YOUR MONEY OR YOUR JOB



If *Milwaukee Spring* stands, "what's the point of a contract?" asks International Union of Electrical Workers attorney Barbara Somson. "It binds a union not to strike. But with this decision a company can agree to a contract, then say to the union, 'We've got a better deal elsewhere—if you won't reopen, we're moving.'"

Intelligence is illegal.

Milwaukee Spring will likely be the cornerstone of NLRB policy under the controversial Chair Donald Dotson. Dotson began his career as an NLRB field attorney, but quickly moved to management's side to work for Westinghouse, Western Electric and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp., before Reagan appointed him a deputy labor secretary in 1981. Dotson has long criticized the NLRB for "making intelligent economic behavior illegal," particularly for declining industries, whose troubles, he believes, are mostly due to high labor costs and union inflexibility.

Dotson tipped his ideological hand early in his term when he appointed his former Labor Department colleague Hugh Reilly, a seven-year veteran of the anti-union Right to Work Legal Foundation, to oversee the enforcement duties of Carter-appointed General Counsel William Lubbers (see *In These Times*, May 18, 1983). But public opinion and legal obstacles blocked the reorganization. Although Dotson publicly claims his order prevailed, the enforcement division functions as before.

Thwarted in that enforcement coup—but only temporarily, as Lubbers' term expires in April—Dotson and his board allies have advanced their agenda on a case-by-case basis. Some of the decisions most disturbing to the labor movement include:

- The two arbitration decisions released with *Milwaukee Spring*. In one, involving United Technologies Corp., the board refused to consider an unfair labor practices charge brought by an employee who was threatened with discipline for filing a grievance, leaving the matter to a private arbitrator. In the second, involving Olin Corp., the board formally changed its standards for reviewing arbitrators' decisions in unfair labor practice cases, ruling a union or employee must prove an arbitrator didn't consider the NLRA violation charge when making its findings. The arbitrator's decision, the board noted, doesn't have to be "totally consistent" with NLRB precedent.

- A January 7 decision upheld the firing of a truck driver who was dismissed for refusing to drive his truck after an accident and complaining to a state Public Service Commission. Overturning a 1975 decision, the board found that the driver's safety complaints did not amount to protected "concerted activity," because he made the complaints alone. Although another driver had earlier complained that the same truck was unsafe, the board ruled the two men made individual complaints that were not protected by the NLRA.

- The *Echlin* decision, determining whether relocation is a mandatory subject of bargaining, is expected shortly. Dotson and board ally Robert Hunter, who raised doubts about mandatory relocation-bargaining in the *Milwaukee Spring* decision but came to no conclusion, are said to be favoring the company; Zimmerman and recent Reagan appointee Patricia Diaz Dennis, who refused to join her colleagues' relocation-bargaining comments in *Milwaukee Spring*, reportedly favor the UAW.

THE INSIDER STORY

decision would be upheld. So when the board, with its three new Reagan appointees, asked to reconsider its decision last May—after the court had begun hearings in the case—it didn't look good for the UAW.

Work moved, wages intact?

The reversal was predictable. On a 3-1 vote, with Carter appointee Don Zimmerman dissenting, the board found that the mid-contract relocation did not violate the UAW's collective bargaining agreement, since the contract didn't include any kind of work-preservation clause. In a striking piece of illogic, the board majority noted that the work may have moved, but because *Milwaukee Spring* "didn't disturb the wages and benefits at its Milwaukee facility," there was no contract violation.

Milwaukee Spring does little to clear up a murky issue in labor law—whether plant relocation is a "mandatory subject of bargaining." A recent Supreme Court ruling cited in both the majority board decision and Zimmerman's dissent, *First National Maintenance vs. NLRB*, found that an employer didn't have to bargain with a union before closing down a portion of its operations due to an economic downturn. To the board majority, *First National* gave employers new freedom in closing and relocation decisions. But Zimmerman's dissent points out that the case involved closing an operation, not moving it to avoid contractual wages. (The board has a decision pending in another relocation case, *Echlin, Inc.*, also involving the UAW, that will force it to consider the question directly.)

But more important than whether an employer must bargain over relocation is whether unions must agree to mid-contract concessions to prevent it. In *Milwaukee Spring*, both sides agree the company has discussed concessions with the union, fulfilling any

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IN THESE TIMES



TO: [REDACTED]
 FROM: [REDACTED]
 RE: "Let Reagan be Nixon (and Mondale be McGovern)"

In 1972, when Richard Nixon ran for re-election, the economy was recovering from a recession and the Vietnam war was still going on. There was a committed core of Nixon-haters determined to oust him from office. The left was organizing against him in every city.

But what happened? He won 60.7 percent of the vote against Democrat George McGovern. How did he do it? He captured the political center and forced the Democrats and McGovern to the far left. **CAPTURING THE CENTER WAS THE KEY TO NIXON'S LANDSLIDE VICTORY.**

It is true that Nixon gave up too much to capture the center. He gave the Russians SALT and the economy a few reams of worthless papers. But did Nixon have to go this far? In 1966, a Republican conservative in California won a landslide victory against the incumbent Democratic governor. Is it possible for a conservative Republican to capture the center without becoming part of the center? Without paying the price in policy and programs? We can do it with politics and image.

THE CHALLENGE TO THE PRESIDENT IN 1984 IS TO CAPTURE THE CENTER WITHOUT BECOMING PART OF THE CENTER.

If we can meet that challenge, we can create a stable electoral majority that can withstand the 1986 Senate elections and the 1988 presidential elections. And we can complete the program that we set out with in 1980.

But it won't be easy to win in 1984. While our present polls show us ahead in every state except Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Arkansas, Oregon, Washington and New Mexico, we can be beaten by lackadaisical campaigning on our part (remember Gov. Reagan's 1970 campaign against Jesse "Big Daddy" Unruh!!) or by a series of surprise disasters at home or overseas.

Nothing is certain in politics. You have to do what you can to narrow the odds. That is the point of the strategy detailed here.

IT'S GOING TO BE FRITZ.

First, who are we going to be running against? Last September, when we met in Santa Barbara, we were talking Glenn. We predicted Glenn's right stuff would blast off past Mondale and he would give us a run in the South and even the West. But Glenn's boosters fizzled. He couldn't mobilize the traditional Dems. And in the primaries, character only counts if your opponent drowned a girl and covered it up.

Now Mondale's the man. And he'll be harder to beat in the fall than Glenn. Character can't run against Reagan, but issues can. If Fritz can wipe that insipid grin off his face, he can get the Dems out to the polls and cut into the President's support among the young (21-45) college-educateds (we'll call them YCEs).

Look at the numbers. Mondale gets a big black turnout, wins 75-80 percent of the Tex-Mexes, prevents Joe Sixpack from punching Republican and wins a majority of the YCEs, and we'll be sending out resumes next November.

Look at the states. Mondale gets most of the East, Minnesota and the industrial Midwest, the Pacific Northwest, West Virginia, Arkansas and Texas, and it's bye-bye White House.

But Mondale can be beaten. He's a big bore. Besides, nobody is really committed to him except a few Norwegian farmers and labor

leaders. He's stuck with the Carter-Mondale record of inflation, hostages and malaise.

He's the Washington candidate, the establishment candidate, with his army of two-bit Democratic lobbyists and his endorsements from Kirkland and the feds. He's the candidate of the liberal social elite, the Eastern media, the homosexuals, the black militants. Think of the Democratic convention in San Francisco next summer: transvestites for Mondale parading down Market Street...Mondale bending down to kiss Jesse Jackson's ring in prime time...

MONDALE CAN BE MCGOVERNIZED.

Against Mondale, Reagan can capture the social center. He can run as the candidate of the people, the anti-establishment, anti-elitist candidate—as the candidate who is going to fight the special interests, who is going to hold out for family, neighborhood and white bread, as the cowboy from the West against the evil bureaucrats and lobbyists. It's a made-for-TV movie.

THE PRESIDENT CAN RUN ON THE RECOVERY.

The President begins the election campaign with two big pluses—the economic recovery and his image as a warm, friendly and assertive leader. He has to make the most of both.

The President must insist that his economic program caused the recovery. He must oppose any attempt by the Democrats or Dole to change his program.

HE MUST OPPOSE ANY NEW TAXES. The President cannot accept new taxes in '84 or '85 (what he *does* later is another question). Let the Democrats propose tax increases. Look where it's getting them in Michigan—the governor and his statehouse majority are being recalled by angry voters because they raised taxes.

HE MUST AVOID BEING SANDBAGGED ON THE DEFICITS OR THE FAIRNESS ISSUE. The President has nothing to apologize for. Under Carter-Mondale, the ordinary citizen could not buy a house or car. What's fair about that? He should foist the deficit issue on the Democratic Congress. Propose another bipartisan commission and let it make nasty spending cut proposals.

The President must strengthen his image as a leader. The April trip to China (memories of 1972) and the June economic summit in London are both important. But the President should not get drawn into a Nixonesque Rose-Garden strategy. He needs to exercise his leadership among the people.

Two reasons: first, he campaigns better than Nixon did; second, he needs to show people he is not too old to be President.

The President's chief weakness as he begins the campaign is the large number of Reagan-haters in the electorate. Harris says 38 percent. That's probably too high. Say a third of the electorate will not vote for him even if he gets a sex-change operation. But as Nixon showed in '72, this kind of weakness can be turned into a strength.

If the Democratic candidate is allowed to build on this group, we're in trouble. But if we can identify the Democrat with his hardcore group of Jesse Jackson and Gloria Steinem, then he's finished. That's where the Nixon strategy comes in.

We start with about 30 percent of the vote committed to us. Who does that leave in the middle? Three groups are particularly important: (1) the YCEs who are not charter

members of the Sierra Club, the Nuclear Freeze or NOW; (2) the 50-60 percent of the blue-collar and union families who voted for us in 1980; (3) the 40-50 percent of the Mexicans and Cubans who voted for us in 1980. We need the YCEs almost everywhere. We need Joe Sixpack in the industrial Midwest and deep South. We need the Cubans in Florida and the Mexicans in Texas, California and the Southwest.

We get these groups partly through image and recovery, just like Nixon did in 1972. We also do little things. We single out a Mexican sergeant in the State of the Union speech (is this still on the boards?). We push tuition tax credits for the working-class Catholics. We also encourage that noble warrior John Anderson to run and give him as much exposure as we can. (No debates without Anderson?) Anderson doesn't give us votes, but he loses YCEs for Mondale and the Democrats.

But for the YCEs and for the swing groups in general, there is no substitute for moving to the political as well as the social center.

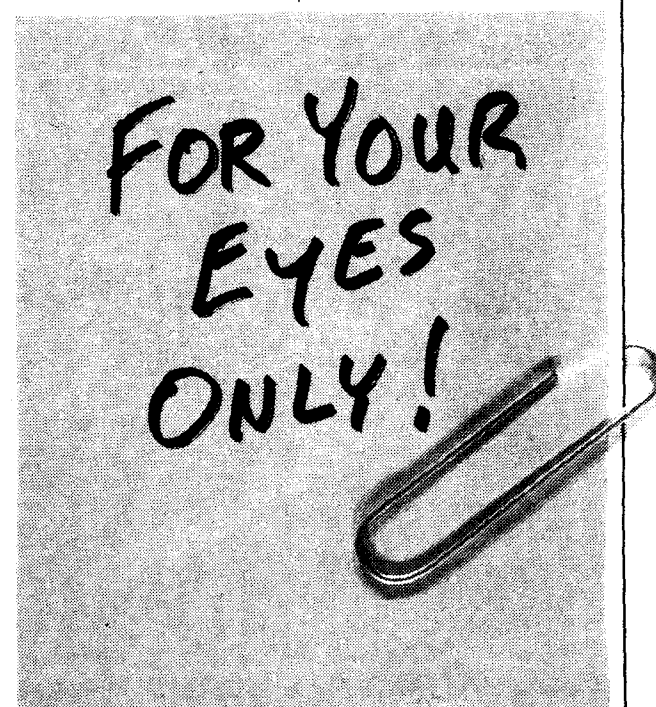
THE PRESIDENT CAN WIN THE CENTER.

To capture the center, the President has to change his image on the environment and war and peace issues. On the trees and breeze, he took the first step by getting rid of Jim Watt and Anne whatever-her-name-was. He might even propose increases in the EPA budget.

On war and peace, he's got to be very careful. He can't give anything to the Ruskies (we don't want 1972), but he's got to appear willing to bargain with them. Down yonder, he can't do anything to make people think that he's going to send troops. (He can make the Communists worry about this, but not some family in Des Moines.) **AND HE'S GOT TO GET THE MARINES OUT OF BEIRUT.**

There are two things the President cannot do if he wants to capture the center: first, he cannot fire up the anti-Reaganite core anymore than it already is. We know blacks and bra-burners are going to vote against us, but we don't want to do anything to increase their numbers or broaden their appeal. (Take that dumb Hunger Commission report.)

Continued on page 10



IN SHORT

Simon says

The federal bankruptcy regulations that allowed Continental Airlines to lay off 65 percent of its employees and slash wages in half for those still working came under fire this week by Rep. Paul Simon (D-Ill.). He introduced a bill to revise the section of the Chapter 11 bankruptcy codes that is increasingly being used by companies as a shrewd business strategy enabling them to sidestep such troublesome obligations as union contracts. The first provision of the Illinois representative's proposed legislation would set the clock back to 1978, when new legislation removed the clause stipulating that a company would have to prove it was broke when it filed for bankruptcy. Presently companies don't have to prove actual insolvency, but rather if they paid off all their current and future debts, they would be insolvent. That is why Continental could file for a Chapter 11 with \$60 million in cash and securities on hand by claiming that the wage escalator written into the union contract would one day drive it to ruin. Or, as chairman Frank Loranzo told the *Wall Street Journal*, "It wasn't a problem of cash—our sole problem is labor."

Guns and better

Two students and their parents, along with Carmelite priest Andrew Skotnicki and Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC)—an ecumenical group concerned with war and peace issues—won when they took on the Chicago Board of Education in the U.S. District Court of Illinois last week. The issue: whether students have the right to hear the "other side" after being bombarded by a recruitment pitch, posters, notebook covers and other glossy hype by the U.S. military. It was the first case to win an argument for draft counseling in schools based on the constitution, with Judge George Leighton ruling: "Once a forum is open for an expression of views under the dual mandate of the First Amendment and equal protection clause, neither the government nor any private censor may pick or choose between views." The plaintiffs emphasized that they do not intend to counsel a student not to register (a felony), but only to open up the issue of the draft so students can make informed decisions whether or not to enlist. As Eloise Chevrier, mother of student Stephen, put it, "They have lots of slick literature that makes you think of it in terms of a career opportunity instead of a life and death question. The military is so accepted in schools that kids dressed up in ROTC uniforms greet you when you pick up your child's grades."

The Board, which failed to submit a brief before Leighton's decision, is now asking him to "reconsider" the case this week. Similar cases are pending in Baltimore, San Diego and Juneau, Alaska. Meanwhile, Skotnicki and CALC are gearing up to train draft counselors and design alternative posters for high schools to counter the military's \$500 million PR job.

Not so final solution

Late last year Colt Industries in Pennsylvania threatened to discontinue health insurance and retirement benefits for 4,000 of its workers by February 4, spurring another conflict in court. Claiming costs were too high, Colt was determined to renege on its contract with workers who had retired in the wake of closings at Crucible Steel plants in Midland and Pittsburgh, Pa. In early January, four affected retirees answered the threat with a challenge of their own: a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh contesting the right of the corporation to break the contract negotiated at the time of the closings.

Last week, after pressure from the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) and adverse publicity from the trial, the company capitulated somewhat: they tentatively announced an interim agreement that would continue a "modified" insurance program until June 1985. How "modified" the program will be is yet to be seen, but Dick Miller of the USWA predicts that hospital and medical coverage will remain the same, although retirement benefits may be allocated on a different basis. The interim agreement has to be okayed by the court before it decides on a more permanent solution.

Finally, an unqualified success

And in the rash of battles in the last few weeks between the monied giants and their stubborn foes, the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT) won their seven-year fight against Nestle hands down. The world's largest food company was forced to the negotiating table to confront the following demands that INFACT issued in December: reduce the number of free supplies of formula to cover only those mothers who can't breastfeed; that the corporation stop sending gifts to health-care workers in Third World countries; and that they change both their literature and labels to caution that infant formula can be hazardous if not used properly.

Kim Henritz, an organizer for INFACT, a coalition of health, women's and religious groups, attributed last year's push to victory to a shift from national sponsoring efforts on an ad-hoc basis to organizing the boycotts from local "campaign centers" in Chicago, Boston and Minneapolis. The local focus propelled the boycott against Taster's Choice (Nestle's largest selling product) and made one Nestle official mutter that the centers INFACT opened up in the various cities were the final straw. —Beth Maschinot



Aggressive employment

PHILADELPHIA—"I've seen three suicides in less than a year. Normally calm men break out in rages. It's been just terrible."

Frank Maguire, president of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 834, was reflecting on the plight of the workers at Philadelphia's Kelsey-Hayes automotive parts plant at a meeting on the American plant closure crisis. More than 80 key labor, religious and community organizers attended the day-long conference hosted by the Full Employment Action Council. Kelsey-Hayes has cut 500 jobs during the Reagan years. "From 1,200 workers in 1979, we're down to 663 today," Maguire said. "Now we face another spring cleaning effort by the company—they plan to cut another 150 people the first week of April. We're just a political football of the corporation."

The litany of plant shutdowns and their effect on surrounding communities was not new to any of the participants—15,000 steelworkers in a dozen plants laid off after Christmas, historic steel towns like Ambridge, Pa., and Cuyahoga, Ohio, drying up like ghost towns. But new aggressive tactics used to counter these shutdowns—both by local organizers and federal legislators—shared at the meeting held promise for those returning to battle shutdowns in their own hometowns.

The Delaware Valley Coalition for Jobs (DVCJ) has built a formidable alliance of workers, clergy and community representatives to curb runaway shops. "We have never seen an example where workers fought and did

not gain," argued DVCJ coordinator Ann Schwartzman. In organizing drives at Eaton's Yale and Town Fork Lift Plant and the Container Corporation of America, workers may not have changed the company's mind to leave, but at least delayed the closing and increased severance and health benefits, sometimes four-fold. In two other plant relocation fights—I.T.E. Gould and Lansdown Steel, both in Philadelphia—the company gave in and the workers are still on the job.

Taking the local action tactic one step further was UAW official Mike Gomez of Los Angeles. Outraged at what he called "plant closing by installment," fellow plant workers and community residents formed a vigorous coalition to "protect jobs while people were still working."

When Gomez read in the *Wall Street Journal* that the GM Van Nuys plant was closing, the coalition did not wait until they were officially notified, Gomez says. "We acted first by setting up a safety net around the plant." The year-long safety net included alerting the local businesses and townspeople of the depressed conditions a plant closing causes and eventually threatening a boycott of GM throughout Southern California. The tactics proved successful enough to prod the president of GM to enter into negotiations with coalition members.

But for other plant closing victims, national legislation seems the answer. Although plant closing legislation has been introduced as far back as 1973, it has never been passed by Congress.

The current legislation, HR 2847, the National Employment Priorities Act is designed to redress some of the more insidious aspects of the plant closing dilemma. The legislation would:

- Require companies to give workers and communities one-year advance notice of an intended plant closing;
- provide assistance to affected workers through job training, job placement and job education expenses.
- provide assistance to affected local governments through grants, loans and other economic assistance; and
- require companies to provide workers with extended health care and other benefits up to 52 weeks or \$25,000 in severance pay.

Undeterred by past failure, the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. William Ford (D-Mich.), is optimistic. "The problem of plant closings is now national in scope. Last year North Carolina had the largest plant shutdown rate, and the states of California, Washington and Oregon had the largest loss of jobs." Ford believes that since geographical opposition is no longer a given, legislative movement is now possible.

The Michigan Democrat, whose district is heavily hurt by auto industry lay-offs, believes the increasing number of Congressional co-signers (75) and the nationwide dimension of the problem will now stimulate aggressive legislative activity, in spite of it being an election year. Ford's main fear, however, is that "the perception that things are improving economically will kill any hope of long-term systematic effort."

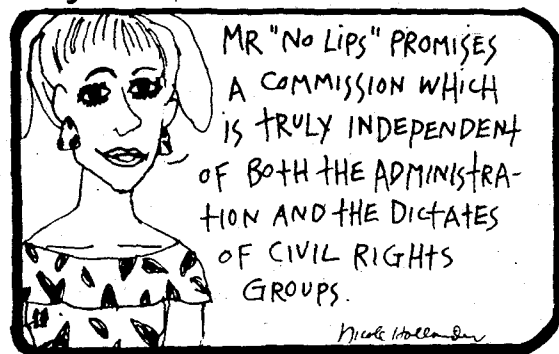
In addition, Ford and his cohorts will have to contend with the age-old argument by conservatives that government intrusion will interfere with the sacred relationship of employers and workers. This tinkering with the free-market economy contention is a weighty obstacle for the bill's proponents to overcome.

—Allen Hornblum

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



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U.S. politicizes Cuba's debt

NEW YORK—Early last month the U.S. tried to throw a monkey wrench into the complicated negotiations involving some 150 Western banks to come up with new terms for extending Cuba's \$3.3 billion foreign debt. As it turned out, the effort was mainly symbolic since American Express—the only U.S. institution involved—simply "sold" its share of the Cuban debt to a West German bank, allowing the negotiations to resume without missing a beat. In this instance, at least, the U.S. economic boycott was about as effective as a picket fence in holding back the sea.

Nonetheless, U.S. harassment of Cuba—and hypocrisy—continue. Shortly after the news of Mexico's imminent bankruptcy broke in August 1982, the U.S. successfully argued in favor of a \$1.07 billion loan by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the apartheid regime of South Africa on the grounds that fragile international financial negotiations must not be politicized. America assured Third World opponents of the loan that, needless to say, it opposed racial separatism in any form whatsoever, but since the world's largest banks were in grave danger of disappearing down a financial black hole, this was one instance when anti-racism would have to take a back seat.

But the Cuban incident demonstrates that politicization of high finance is definitely a one-way street in the view of the Reagan administration. If it hurts Washington's friends, such as South Africa, it is disruptive and irresponsible. If Washington's enemies suffer, though, it is the unfortunate consequence of a principled decision.

From the Cuban point of view, the debt negotiations are painfully ironic. Twenty-five years after the revolution and 22 years after Castro declared that his country

would henceforth and forevermore be socialist, Cuba is as economically dependent as ever on the vagaries of international capitalism. Efforts to diversify the economy have made little headway. In 1982, sugar accounted for 63 percent of Cuba's hard-currency exports (those to non-socialist nations), down considerably from the mid-'70s peak of 88 percent. Recently though the proportion has begun to rise again. The price of sugar, meanwhile, reached a high of 28 cents a pound as inflation was cresting in 1980-81, but then crashed to a low of six cents a pound, with devastating consequences for the Cuban economy.

Since then, demand has firmed and the world economic recovery has modestly boosted prices to the 11-cent level. The Cuban government is encouraged, but the world oversupply of sugar is still tremendous and threatening. The Cuban government frankly concedes that its own recovery depends on the capitalist world's continued recuperation.

Elaine Fuller, an economics student and member of the editorial board of *CubaTimes*, a pro-Castro journal, reports that Cuba is attempting to work its way out of its economic hole by cutting back on industrial investment and raising prices on luxury consumer goods. Despite the domestic austerity, though, she found on a recent trip to Havana that the standard of living of the average citizen is continuing to improve, mainly due to the comprehensive rationing of basic food staples.

Moreover, as eminently conservative a journal as *The Economist* recently observed that Cuba's annual growth rate has averaged 4.7 percent since the revolution, which is among the highest in Latin America. "By Third World standards," the magazine noted, "Cubans live well. They are well clothed and enjoy free education and health care.... For Cuba's poor majority, life has improved, though it remains austere."

—Dan Lazare



By Michael McConnell

For U.S. church people, both the curious and the committed, Central America is becoming familiar terrain. This decade's Vietnam is in the neighborhood and the religious community wants to see for itself what is happening and why.

That's why religious orders, mainline Protestant denominations and national religious organizations like Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) and Church Women United have been organizing a variety of tours and fact-finding delegations to the region since 1981.

when 156 U.S. religious people from 32 states held a vigil in the border town of Jalapa. Already at that time more than 1,000 Nicaraguans had been killed by *contra* attacks, 300 of those from Jalapa. Out of that experience came the idea of a permanent presence.

Since November a long-term team of eight people has been living along the border. Every two weeks they are joined by rotating teams of 15 people. These temporary groups are drawn from state and regional Witness for Peace organizations that were set up by the original vigilers.

James MacLeod, a WFP organizer in McAllen, Texas,

America. They called on Congress to stop funding the *contras*, end military aid to El Salvador and stop funding and building military bases in Honduras.

Delegation members were "appalled" by the extent of U.S. involvement in the war against Nicaragua. They talked with people in Honduras who had been paid \$1,000 per month by the U.S. to fight against Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, they saw the hardship people are experiencing because of the attacks. In El Salvador they were particularly angered by the amount of repression against the church. Salvadoran relief workers were receiving death threats

Briefing: U.S. churches work on resistance



Witness for Peace shields Nicaraguan border from *contra* bullets.

Those who already know the amount of U.S. dollars and military power poured into the region and are clear about the immorality of U.S. intervention are organizing riskier trips. More than 250 Christians from the U.S. have traveled to the Nicaraguan-Honduras border in the last six months. This action, known as Witness for Peace (WFP), has grown into a grassroots ecumenical network of U.S. Christians committed to a continuous non-violent resistance to U.S. covert and overt aggressions against Nicaragua.

In what organizers are calling "the moral equivalent to war," U.S. religious people are traveling to the war zones in Nicaragua to put their own bodies between the Nicaraguan people and the counterrevolutionaries, or *contras*. Besides saving lives, the action is designed to show the Nicaraguan people that North American Christians do not support the terrorism being waged against them.

Jim Wallis, chair of the Witness for Peace advisory council, characterizes this action as "a movement from protest to resistance. We are no longer saying the policy is wrong, we are now saying we are going to stop it." Wallis sees that U.S. government policy is sponsoring mercenary violence against civilians in Nicaragua. It is nothing less than "state-instigated terrorism." Since one half the population of Nicaragua is less than age 15, it is therefore "a war against children," he adds. The action began last July

says, "There is a significant amount of danger, but the willingness to bear that danger and take the risk to life it implies is at the very heart of this project." The danger, rather than discouraging people, seems to be a spur to more widespread involvement. Regional groups of people, including Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants and members of the historic peace churches (Quakers, Church of the Brethren, Mennonites), have flooded national and regional offices with offers of support.

Less radical but still effective in awakening people to the futility of U.S. policy in the region is what one national denominational executive calls her "Republican strategy." The strategy has been to appeal to top church leaders and grassroots conservatives by offering tours that talk "to both sides." They usually visit Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. When possible, they meet with government and opposition leaders in each country.

Typical of such tours was one organized last November by Gretchen Eick, policy advocate for the United Church of Christ (UCC). The tour group included national executives from the Presbyterians, Mennonites, Brethren and Baptist churches along with directors of church relief agencies. Upon returning, the group concluded that U.S.-funded fighting in El Salvador and Nicaragua is destroying the people and culture of Central

and were being arrested. "There seems to be a McCarthy-like rush to label humanitarian assistance as subversive," said Eick. The Salvadoran relief workers have requested that North American church people stay with them to help insure their safety. Patricia Rumer, UCC regional secretary for Latin America, has issued an appeal for volunteers to work in the camps to provide an international presence.

A visit to Central America is converting many church people. Tour leaders are finding that when people return home they begin local organizing efforts to change U.S. Central American policy. Future tours are even asking people to make those kinds of commitments in advance, agreeing to work for justice in Central America when they return. Another strategy is to take people from key legislative districts where "swing votes" may be crucial in stopping funds to the *contras*.

In addition to legislative work, religious people returning from tours are organizing educational campaigns, holding vigils and demonstrations and participating in acts of civil disobedience. As Jim Wallis of Witness for Peace concludes, "The U.S. government and the churches are headed on a collision course."

Michael McConnell is a UCC minister and is on the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America.

IN THE NATION

NUCLEAR ISSUES

Physicians at the crossroads

By David Moberg

WASHINGTON

WHEN THE FIRST ATOMIC bomb was exploded, the people involved had the ominous feeling that "the genie was out of the bottle" and could never be put back. Although there were a few victories, such as the limited test ban treaty of 1963 and the SALT I anti-ballistic missile treaty of 1972, much of the public gradually grew wearily resigned to the nuclear age and numbed to its awesome threat.

But that began to change in the late '70s. Suddenly, millions of Americans became aware of the special dangers of new weapons, such as the MX missile, that would upset the long-standing and tenuous balance of terror and served no purpose except as a first strike in a pre-emptive nuclear war. At the same time, they gradually realized that talk of successfully waging limited nuclear war was utterly mad: not only would it quickly escalate, but even a small nuclear war would be incredibly devastating. Now another genie was out of the bottle—a newly aware public.

One of the people most responsible for pulling the cork was Helen Caldicott, an Australian doctor who began touring the country in the late '70s with a spellbinding message—both technically informed and emotionally disturbing—that was designed to "break through the psychic numbing." Caldicott reinvigorated a small group of doctors originally organized out of concern about the effects of nuclear tests. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) played a role in winning that initial test-ban treaty and for the first time made research on and discussion of the health hazards of nuclear war professionally legitimate. But it was only with Caldicott's enthusiastic work, perversely aided by Ronald Reagan's acceleration of the already worsening policies of Jimmy Carter, that PSR took off, bringing its cloak of medical authority to the prescription against nuclear weapons.

Now PSR claims 30,000 members in 148 chapters. It has inspired emulators in other fields—teachers, lawyers, computer professionals, nurses and many more—some of whom are now forming a new Professional Coalition for Nuclear Arms Control. The new genie is manifested not only by this antinuclear proliferation (there are more than 1,250 groups opposed to nuclear arms in the U.S. by one count) but also by the spread of disarmament and antinuclear politics to other groups.

PSR is now at the crossroads. At its annual meeting in Washington the last weekend in January, PSR officially took note that Helen Caldicott had stepped down some months earlier as president of the organization. Could the group, which had so benefitted from her ability to recruit enthusiasts, continue to thrive? More important, as the task becomes less one of waking people to the perils of nuclear war and more one of devising political solutions and strategies, will PSR lose its sense of mission?

The story is told of one doctor who last year had finished the usual PSR speech detailing exactly what would happen when a nuclear bomb burst over Hometown, USA, with the high winds, the firestorms, the exhaustion of oxygen, the transformation of glass and other materials into deadly projectiles and the radioactive contamination of the environment. "But doctor," one frustrated



About the 1984 presidential election, Physicians for Social Responsibility president emerita Helen Caldicott says, "Anybody but Reagan."

woman said from the audience, "we know all that. What do we do?" Similarly, an American Medical Association survey of doctors showed 62 percent favored a nuclear freeze, yet 60 percent also felt that Reagan was "balanced" in his approach to the Soviet Union and only 15 percent found him "too aggressive."

One of the present dangers is that everyone—including Reagan officials and extreme right-wingers like Phyllis Schlafly—will say that, of course, nuclear war would be terrible. That is why we need a tough stance with the Russians and a military build-up, especially the construction of an anti-ballistic missile shield on the "high frontier" of space, they say.

As a result, within the last year PSR has gradually become more political, while still taking a very cautious approach designed to appeal to conservative doctors and continuing its basic educational lesson in areas like the South and Southwest where it has not sunk in as well. It has criticized civil defense programs, lobbied against the MX, supported the freeze and built a network of pressure groups in every congressional district. This year it will include advocacy of a comprehensive test ban and opposition to research or deployment of space-based weaponry.

New research on the effects of nuclear war by a research team including astronomer Carl Sagan also underlines the basic PSR message that nuclear war is not survivable. The Sagan group, expanding on earlier Swedish research, showed how even a modest exchange of nuclear weapons between the U.S. and the USSR would produce such volumes of dust and smoke (especially if cities were targets) that as much as 99 percent of the sun's energy could be blocked, with the earth's temperatures plummeting by 30 to 40 degrees centigrade. As a result all fresh water would freeze, most trees and crops would be killed off, the majority of large animals and humans would perish and only weeds and insects would be likely to survive.

"What was arguably rhetorical a few years ago about the extinction of the species is no longer rhetoric," PSR board member H. Jack Geiger says. "Also, the new message is that 'star wars,' even more than civil defense and crisis reloca-

tion, create the opportunity to discuss survivability and the impossibility of defense." Reagan's development of first-strike weapons combined with the efforts to create a space-based system of anti-satellite (and therefore potentially anti-ballistic missile) weapons further create the illusion among U.S. policymakers that nuclear war could be fought and consequent fears on the Soviet side that it will be.

"That's why nuclear winter is so important," Geiger said. "Only with survivability does being 'ahead' or 'behind' make any sense." Nuclear winter could be precipitated for the entire northern hemisphere—and probably the world—even if only one side fired its weapons in a totally "successful" first strike.

But Federation of American Scientists Director Jeremy Stone warned physicians that war planners are unlikely to be affected by even the best-argued projections of nuclear winter. "This is a political problem," he said. "These two sides can't solve their problems through medical or physical science. It has to be done politically. The problem is they're not interested [in data on the threat of world annihilation]. They are caught up in internal struggles in their societies."

Those struggles even constrain groups like PSR. Geiger, for example, argued against PSR adopting a policy goal of abolition of nuclear weapons, since no one could clearly describe how that would happen, and favored reduction of arsenals on each side to 400 to 500 megatons, enough to destroy totally the other side. Other PSR leaders, such as Chicago chapter President Richard Gardiner, see that as inconsistent with their message on nuclear devastation.

Caldicott has little tolerance for such caution. "I think we've been enormously successful because we've been flamboyant, and because the doctors were doing something doctors don't normally do. So it made the public sit up and take notice," she said. She decided to relinquish the presidency of the organization in part "so I could be freer, not representing [30,000] physicians. I could represent my own views, be more provocative politically, which is what I want to do in this election year." Although she is continuing as PSR president emerita, her main energies will be directed into the

35,000-member Women Against Nuclear Disarmament (WAND), "working on the gender gap"—the much greater opposition to Reagan's bellicosity among women—by trying to recruit one million women this year to "hold candidates' feet to the fire."

With the threat of war emerging in some polls as the number one issue and with Reagan seen by as many as 43 percent of Americans in a recent *New York Times* poll as likely to get the country involved in a war, peace groups see an opportunity to make their voices felt. Caldicott's view—"anybody but Reagan"—is most pervasive, but many of those attending the PSR convention seemed unexcited about any of the Democratic alternatives.

Deputy Defense Secretary Richard Perle attempted to blunt the attacks on his boss by insisting on the essential continuity between Carter and Reagan military policies. Jerome Grossman, chairman of Council for a Liveable World, one of the most experienced peace political action groups, basically agreed with that analysis but concluded that the Democrats need pressuring while antinuclear groups fight Reagan.

A survey of peace group leaders published in the February *Harper's* showed George McGovern the overwhelming ideal favorite of half of those who responded, but 41 percent would recommend voting for Mondale (even though the majority thought Reagan would win). Yet Mondale recently impressed a small group of Washington peace organization leaders constituted as the "peace roundtable" with his willingness not only to support a bilateral freeze and other steps for bilateral reduction but also to take "unilateral" initiatives to halt the arms race and induce Soviet cooperation.

Mondale told the group, according to PSR Director Jane Wales, that he would pull back all tactical, battlefield nuclear weapons from the front lines in Europe and move to a "no first use" policy.

He pledged a six-month moratorium on underground testing, to be followed by a comprehensive test ban treaty if the Russians responded. He would declare a moratorium on anti-satellite weapons testing and on submarine launched Cruise missiles. He favored the so-called "walk in the woods" disarmament proposal that would reduce deployment of Cruise missiles in Europe and eliminate all Pershing II missiles in exchange for a reduction in Soviet SS20 missiles (an arrangement that the Soviets reportedly supported.)

Although Mondale also opposes the MX missile, the B-1 bomber "build-

PSR now claims 30,000 members in 148 chapters across the country.

down" strategies that reduce numbers of weapons but permit dangerous modernization, he supports the Stealth bomber, the Midgetman single-warhead missile and the first-strike Trident 2 missile (although he favored deploying it far from Soviet shores).

McGovern may go farther, but Mondale's pledges to the peace roundtable went beyond most of his public statements so far, creating a warm feeling among disarmament leaders that Mondale will need to mobilize the potential armies—such as the Freeze Voter '84 campaign—to work hard for him.

Despite Reagan's apparent vulnerability on the issues of war and peace, as president he can easily manipulate foreign policy issues to mold public opinion. Pollsters claim that Reagan's popularity is less when people are first asked about his performance on various issues than when they are simply questioned about general support for him. That argues for Mondale, if he continues to lead the pack, to take his disarmament views to a larger audience than a small peace roundtable if he hopes to defeat Reagan. ■

By David Beers

COMITAN, MEXICO

THE JULY COUP THAT OUSTED Efraín Ríos Montt, the right-wing evangelist president of Guatemala, and installed in his place Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores has meant little to Indian refugees from that country.

Refugees living in the jungles on Mexico's southern border say only the names have been changed in the Guatemalan leadership. While they wait for an opportunity to return, they are caught in limbo, dependent on a Mexican bureaucracy that views the peasant refugees as a threat to its shaky political and economic situation and is increasingly heavy-handed in dealing with them.

So far only a handful of refugees have returned. Mejía, as assistant minister of defense under Ríos Montt's predecessor and then minister of defense under Ríos Montt, helped engineer the violent "pacification program" that forced the peasants to flee the Guatemalan countryside. Since 1981 the army's brutal campaign against guerrillas and suspected guerrillas has left more than 20,000 civilians dead and a million homeless—most of them Mayan Indian peasants.

During that time, the number of Guatemalans seeking haven in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas has grown steadily, and present estimates put the number as high as 100,000.

Under Mejía's leadership, the Guatemalan army has stepped up its activities in the highlands near Mexico. Oxfam, the British humanitarian organization, has confirmed refugee reports that Guatemalan airplanes and helicopters are steadily pounding the countryside with bombs, a new tactic, and that the army is pressing on with its efforts to deforest and monitor more closely the section of the Guatemalan-Mexican border most refugees cross.

The widespread, seemingly indiscriminate killing of civilians by the army in the rural areas—which are 80 percent Indian—has prompted international observers to charge that the first priority of the Guatemalan government is no longer counterinsurgency. Oxfam America, Amnesty International and the Catholic Church, among others, claim that the war has become an opportunity for Guatemala's military elite to consolidate land in the oil-rich northern and western regions. Fueling the violence, the organizations claim, is an animosity long held by those in power, the Spanish-descended *ladinos*, toward an Indian culture they perceive as a hindrance to economic progress.

The story of a refugee named Francisco Hernández, interviewed at a Mexican hospital late last year, seems to give weight to that theory. He said, "In 1982 the army came to my father's village of Cuarto Pueblo, near the border. They strangled four of his children before his eyes, then cut him in half with a machete. In all, 150 people died there."

Hernández, an Indian, said his father carried a card that certified him a member of the anti-Communist MLN party, which he showed to the soldiers. "But it is of no worth that he was an anti-Communist because they kill us for our race. They want to finish off our people," he said.

Hernández added, "My father's mistake was to trust the army. When they killed him, that is when I knew that, with this government, we would have to leave."

Several months later, when the army invaded his village of Xalbal in the Quiché region and killed 62 people, Hernández said he was able to escape because he had made precautions to leave at a moment's notice.

Camps harassed.

Once inside Mexico, refugees continue to fear harassment by the Guatemalan military. Guatemalan helicopters regularly fly over the larger camps, and refugees from the Chupadero camp, which has 1,500 inhabitants and is close to the border, recently reported spotting a helicop-

ter of the type used by the Guatemalan military hovering low over the camp while someone snapped photos from a window.

Refugees and aid workers acknowledge that the camps are regularly visited by undercover Guatemalan informants who present themselves as traveling vendors or evangelists. A Mexican priest who frequently visits the camps said, "We don't give those *orejas*—ears—any problems. We hope they return and report peacefulness exactly as they see. That is the best defense."

Aid workers and refugees are nervous about the informants because most of the camps are isolated, close to the border and vulnerable to incursions by the Guatemalan military. There have been several such attacks over the past two years in which about a dozen refugees, as well as several Mexican farmers, have been killed.

A nurse who regularly visits the large camp of Ixcán reported that in late September 20 headless bodies were discovered less than a mile from camp, just across the Guatemalan border. She said it wasn't clear whether the bodies were refugees, but that Ixcán residents interpreted the murders as a warning from Guatemala's crack soldiers, the *kaibiles*, not to return.

have improved. They say food deliveries by the Mexican Commission to Aid Refugees (COMAR), with \$6 million in funding from the United Nations, have become more frequent and more abundant, and that the local Catholic Church, with a refugee budget of about \$1.5 million, has become a sizeable source of aid as well.

Mexico finds itself in the difficult situation of having not only to address the survival needs of the refugees, but also to answer complaints from across the border in Guatemala that the camps are havens for Communist guerrillas.

Sensitive to such charges, the Mexican government has sought tighter control within the camps by implementing new policies, some of which further restrict the few freedoms refugees were allowed in the past.

The change was signaled in July when COMAR, a body created to give aid to the refugees, was effectively merged with Migración, the department responsible for policing Mexico's borders. COMAR's chief, Ortiz Monasterio, was abruptly removed and his duties were assumed by Mario Vallejo, head of Migración. Those who know Vallejo describe him as "more powerful than Monasterio," and as "an uncompromising hardliner."

Vallejo has placed Migración police in

Indians make up more than half the population. With the sudden influx of thousands of landless Guatemalan peasants into Chiapas, where land distribution is already a hot issue among Mexican Indians, the political atmosphere has become extremely charged.

Clashes between militant Indian groups and local officials are common in Chiapas. Hundreds of Indians recently marched on the state capitol Tuxtla Gutiérrez, demanding the release of all Indian "political prisoners." The situation

The Mexican authorities view the Guatemalan refugees as a threat to their already shaky political and economic situation.



Approximately 80 percent of the Guatemalan refugees in Mexican camps are women and children.

MEXICO

Indian refugees caught in limbo

As recently as last year, Mexican authorities voiced optimism that conditions in Guatemala would improve, and that most of the refugees would return when Mexico's coffee harvest, a traditional magnet for Guatemalan immigrants, had ended. But these predictions have proven false, and the refugees remain, providing a burden difficult for Mexico to shoulder.

Getting food to camps scattered throughout the jungle has proven logistically difficult, and the Mexican bureaucracy has come under fire frequently from the international press for seeming slow to meet the challenge.

A visit to several camps in February 1983 found most refugees suffering from malnutrition and other hunger-related diseases. Since then tightened restrictions have prevented foreigners, including journalists, from entering any but the healthiest camps. But according to doctors and aid workers who visit the camps regularly, conditions in the larger ones

most of the larger camps. Now refugees must receive written authorization to travel outside their own camps, even for medical purposes, and they are allowed to work only for *finqueros*—large land holders—designated by Migración. Refugees say their pay rarely tops 30 cents a day, about one-tenth Mexico's minimum wage.

Keeping the refugees dependent upon the Mexican authorities for survival has created an opportunity for abuses, and some refugees make accusations, difficult to prove, that COMAR and Migración personnel have extorted money from them, and even that a few officials are paid collaborators with the Guatemalan military.

Tensions grow.

In Chiapas, as in Guatemala, there is a cultural division between the Indians and the generally better off *ladino* population, and in the southern part of the state,

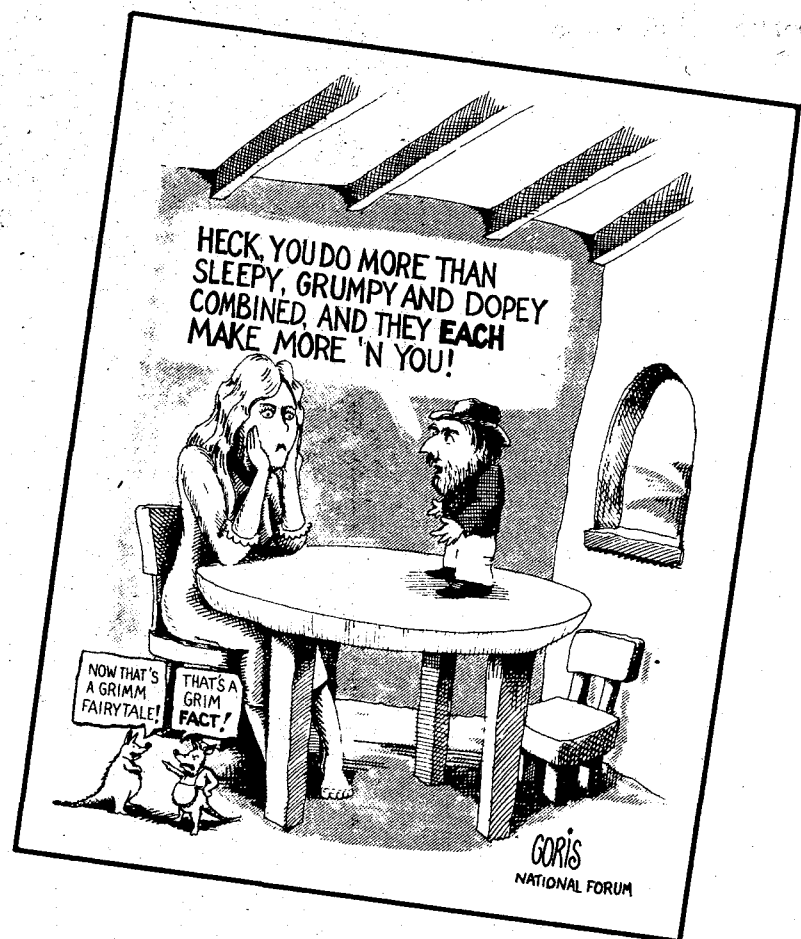
has prompted several government and business leaders to voice concern that, by allowing the Guatemalan refugees to stay, Chiapas might be "importing a revolution." And some of the most conservative elements have denounced aid to refugees as support of "subversives and guerrillas."

Such fears were boldly manifested the week of July 24, when Gustavo Zarate, a professor of social science at the Independent University of Chiapas in San Cristóbal, Víctor Hugo Gutiérrez, a student there, and Mercedes Ozuna, who has organized weaving cooperatives in several refugee camps, were kidnapped at gunpoint. All three said they were tortured and forced to sign false confessions that claimed they had collaborated with the local Catholic church in arming and training guerrillas in the refugee camps. Their confessions were presented to a judge in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and Ozuna said later that the entire ordeal had been planned and executed by local right-wing officials.

The refugees themselves, 80 percent of whom are women and children, flatly deny that there are guerrillas among them. Nevertheless, their simple presence seems to be having a destabilizing effect on the country that has received them. And until the violence in Guatemala cools considerably, the easy way out for Mexico—sending the refugees home—is simply not an option. ■

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FRANCE

Communists blast economic liberalism

By Diana Johnstone

P A R I S

THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO DIScredit and isolate the Communists is mounting in France, just as the French Communist Party (PCF) is drawing its own battle lines against deindustrialization.

All forecasts indicate that the left government's initially successful effort to hold unemployment around two million is going to collapse this year. Finance Minister Jacques Delors' deflationary policies have reduced purchasing power and labor costs without stimulating productive investment. Massive shutdowns and layoffs are coming up in shipbuilding, steel, coal mining and other major sectors of industry, which could swell the ranks of the jobless to three million by the end of the year.

Delors' policy of "rigor" has been accompanied by an incessant and evidently successful popularization by state-owned television—as well as most print media—of free market attitudes toward the economic crisis. Economic liberalism has rapidly been established as the new common sense. The lesson has been driven home that industries must have their social burdens lightened in order to enable them to compete successfully in the world market. Anti-Communism has meshed neatly with this economic instruction, suggesting that any departure from liberal economics must lead to the "gulag."

Delors' economic measures and the ideological campaign appear to be part of an effort to create an attractive business climate and entice investment capital into French industry, despite the presence of a left-coalition government. Socialist opposition to Delors' policies was stifled at the Socialist Party Congress last fall, although it remains latent. Only the Communists are openly demanding a change in economic policy or, as they express it, "greater firmness in resisting pressure from big business."

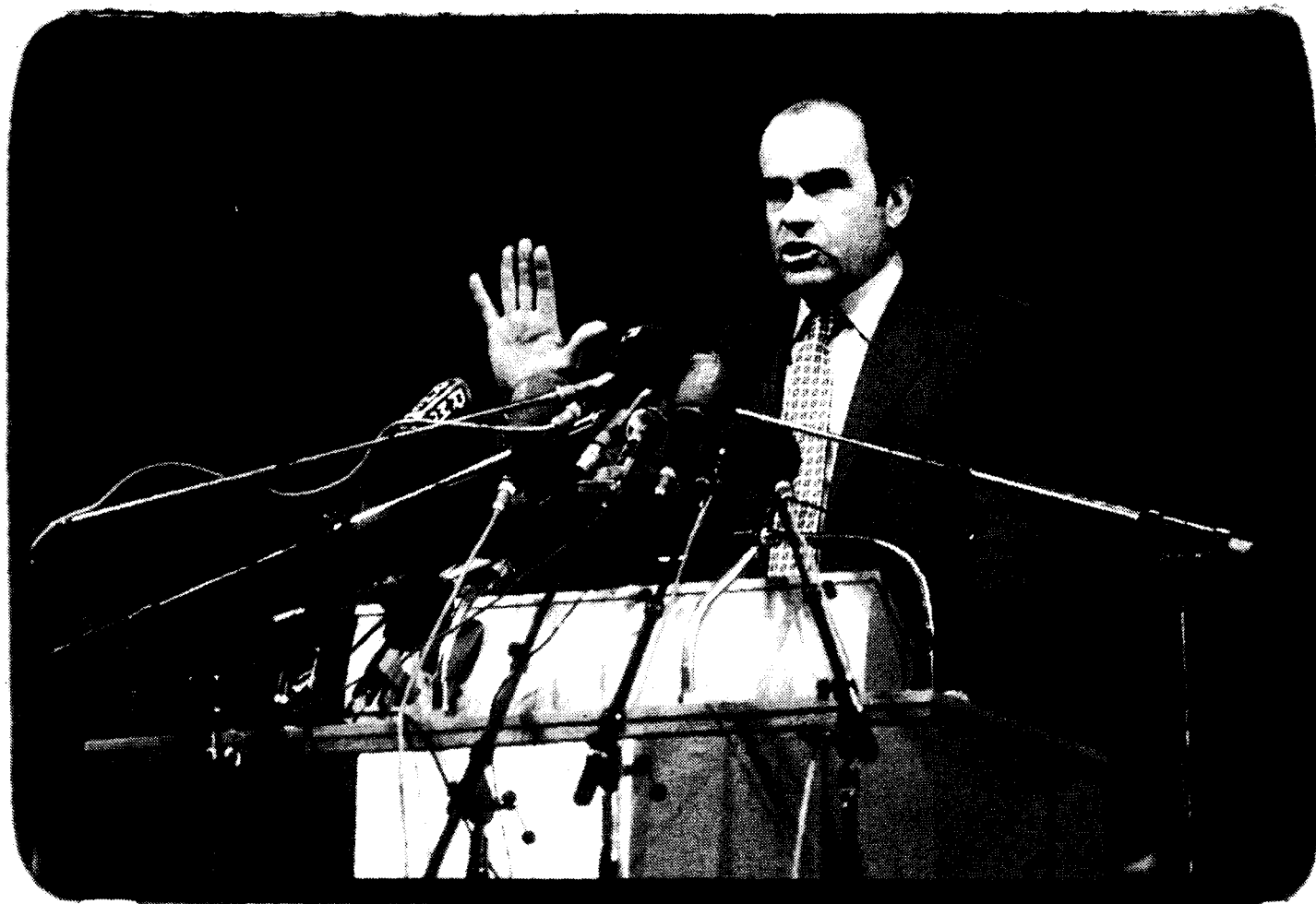
The Communist demand to expand (by increasing purchasing power) the domestic market and recapture part of it for French production is dismissed by the liberals as "protectionism." The issue is not so simple.

At a mid-January meeting of the PCF central committee, leader George Marchais stressed, "We are at the hour of crucial choices, for France and for its government." Marchais' main argument was that big business was using "technological mutations" as a pretext to shut down industries in order to shift capital from production to speculation.

He maintained that available financial resources have increased in the last couple of years, both from profits and from government subsidies, yet investments have dropped by 9 percent. And he claimed more than 60 percent of the resources available to develop industrial investment, including those provided by the left government, had been diverted toward financial operations.

Marchais rejected the chorus of accusations that the PCF is archaic in its attachment to industrial production. The PCF has always championed technological progress. Marchais said Communists were defending industrial sectors such as shipbuilding not because they were party "bastions" but because they have a future. Shipbuilding is now in the front line of the battle against deindustrialization.

"Liquidating basic industries does not mean favoring new forms of production," the PCF general secretary argued in his report to the central committee. "They complement each other. New products and procedures have a vital need for outlets in basic industries that can be developed and modernized."



At a January meeting, PCF leader George Marchais said: "We are at the hour of crucial choices."

"Cutting back production in France in order to transfer capital to New York or Singapore does not modernize French industry" but weakens it still further, he said.

The new alibi.

Interviewed on television by a trio of openly hostile journalists, Marchais stoutly maintained that jobs could be saved by modernization. Citing an OECD estimation that robotization might affect employment in France by only 0.2 percent, Marchais said massive layoffs was leading not to the modernization but to the suppression of certain industries. Technological mutation is just the latest in a series of alibis for increasing the return on financial capital, he said. Previous alibis were the oil crisis, Third World competition and the worldwide recession.

Journalists kept trying to steer Marchais into an attack on Mitterrand that could be interpreted as Communist preparation to leave the government. But leaving would not help, Marchais insisted. On the contrary, the Communists will stay on to try to strengthen the government's resistance to business pressure. The PCF leader brandished as holy writ Mitterrand's campaign platform promising to give priority to employment and the salvation of French industry. That's all he was demanding. Marchais noted that he himself had run on a program that went much further, but the French had chosen Mitterrand, and the Communists, as good democrats, went along with the majority decision. Yet the current industrial program was not what Mitterrand had promised.

But surely, journalists probed, he couldn't expect capitalists to run businesses without a profit. "I am for

profit," retorted the Communist leader. "But I am against excessive withdrawal of capital from industries to go speculate on the dollar." He complained that nationalized industries were now being run the same way they were before Mitterrand took office.

"So it wasn't worthwhile nationalizing them!" exclaimed one journalist.

"Exactly!" retorted Marchais. "We wanted to nationalize them in order to run them differently, to use them to develop French production and create jobs." Marchais accused nationalized industries such as Pechiney Ugine Kuhlmann (a transnational mining conglomerate) of using public funds for financial speculation.

How could Marchais expect to get the bosses to do things his way instead of seeking ever greater profits? "Struggle. The workers must struggle using the new rights enacted by the left government," said Marchais.

The journalists often nudged each other and chuckled as Marchais spoke. They called to his attention the fact that workers hadn't been seen much in the streets recently. "I'll be frank," said Marchais. "There were illusions when the left took office." Not among Communists, but among the majority who voted to get rid of Giscard without measuring the difficulty of accomplishing change without "deeper reforms" than the Socialists proposed.

It is now clear that the bosses are not letting up their pressure and want to obtain more and more job cutbacks. Marchais warned of a trap for the left if it gave in to pressure from the bosses' confederation, the CNPF, and its leader Yvan Gattaz, in the hopes of encouraging productive investment. French capitalists are politically motivated, he maintained. They want to "prove that the left cannot run things; they want to push the country further into crisis to discredit the left government. That is the Gattaz line."

The Communists know that some of their arguments make sense to some Socialists, even though party discipline obliges them to support Delors. Delors and what is called the "second left" would be happy to see the Communists out of the government. For years, "second left" Socialist leaders like Delors, Michel Rocard and French Democratic Labor Confederation (CFDT) leader Edmond Maire have been glorified by the media, the bet-

ter to condemn the old left as outdated, anachronistic. But other Socialists agree with *Monde diplomatique* editor Claude Julien that "breaking up the coalition will open the royal road back to power for the right" and wipe out any foreseeable return of a left majority.

Bitter divisions.

Socialists are increasingly divided. In a recent attack on his rival Henri Krasucki, general secretary of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), Edmond Maire suggested that if Krasucki's ideas were to prevail, "a unionist like me would have no choice but between clandestinity and the psychiatric hospital." This was too much for Socialist Party First Secretary Lionel Jospin, who called Maire's statement a "fantasy" that "makes a mockery of real clandestinity and real psychiatric hospitals." There is only one real Lech Walesa, Jospin observed, and "the French Communist Party is not the Communist Party of the USSR."

On the other hand, the official government spokesman, novelist Max Gallo, is bringing out a new book called *La Troisième Alliance, pour un nouvel individualisme*, in which he condemns the Communist Party approach to economic issues as typical of the Stalinist mentality.

The PCF has at least managed to avoid the trap of being split off from the government over an international issue, such as the Euromissiles, that would be interpreted as "taking orders from Moscow." If the PCF is isolated on a domestic economic issue, it will at least be isolated along with its labor base. The French Communists remain cautious on East-West issues. In his television appearance, Marchais gave a surprisingly vibrant tribute to Nikita Khrushchev, denouncer of Stalin and champion of peaceful coexistence, and disclosed that he had personally protested to Brezhnev that insufficient honor had been paid to Khrushchev in the Soviet Union.

Marchais' interview by unfriendly journalists on the least-watched TV channel could not begin to counter the cres-

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The French media has helped to popularize economic liberalism as the new common sense.

Memo

Continued from page 3

The President should go out of his way to neutralize both groups: stress the administration's commitment to equal rights and economic justice, and cite the numbers of black and women appointees.

Second, the President must keep the nuts of the far right and the Viguerie crowd at arm's length. Maybe even farther than that. If the President gets identified with this crowd, he's lost. HE MUST APPEAR TO BE THE CANDIDATE OF THE COMMON-SENSE CENTER AND NOT THE EXTREME RIGHT.

Most conservatives will vote for the President even if he recognizes Cuba. Look at Nixon's conservative support in 1972. THE BEST WAY TO KEEP CONSERVATIVES ABOARD IS TO MCGOVERNIZE MONDALE, NOT VIGUERIZE REAGAN.

But the President can keep conservatives happy and active by emphasizing safe conservative issues like school prayer that are supported by a popular majority and won't get the President branded an extremist.

He should also find private ways to appease the Viguerie crowd. A few White House meetings. They can be very useful in the campaign because they can make charges against Mondale that the President's campaign cannot afford to make. A little slander never hurts, especially if it's done by somebody else.

BE PREPARED FOR SURPRISES.

The most serious threat to the President's campaign could come from unexpected catastrophes at home or overseas. In 1980, Carter was done in by the Ayatollah. In 1984, the President could be done in by some Lebanese Muslim driving a truck with dynamite in the back. Like the Boy Scouts, the campaign must

be prepared.

THE RECOVERY COULD FIZZLE. There are already some signs that the recovery is winding down, and if Volcker gets panicked by the deficits and Wall Street, he could make sure that it does. The President doesn't want to pull a Nixon-Burns, but he should make sure that Volcker doesn't unnecessarily jeopardize the recovery. And if Volcker does, he should be prepared to crucify him and the Democrats.

THE RUSSIANS COULD CAUSE TROUBLE. The Soviet leaders are going to do what they can to prevent the President winning. That's why they are not going to return to the arms talks. They might also boycott the Olympics or pull some stunt in the Mideast through the Syrians or the PLO. This is another reason that the troops must be withdrawn.

If any of these "surprises" occur, the President must use the press and his ability as a communicator to shape the public's reaction to them. There is no such thing as an objective event. The effect of an event depends on how it is reported and how it is interpreted.

A NEW CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY.

If we play our cards right, we can win—and win big—in 1984. If Nixon was not torpedoed by the Democrats and the press after the 1972 election, he could have built the basis for a permanent Republican and conservative majority. Ronald Reagan would now be completing his second rather than his first term in office. But we had to suffer through Ford and then Carter.

The 1980 landslide again showed the potential for a conservative majority. We can make that potential real in 1984.

The President will not be able to defeat Mondale as easily as Nixon defeated McGovern. The President is not willing to compromise his own principles in the way Nixon did. The President knows that if he wins in 1984, he will have to face the consequences in 1985 of a bloated money

supply or an infamous treaty with the Russians.

The President also faces a Democratic opposition that is far less divided than it was in 1972 or even 1980. In 1972, George Meany didn't vote for McGovern. In 1984, Kirkland is buying Mondale's lunches.

But the President has some advantages over Nixon that should allow him to do nearly as well. The Republican Party is far stronger now than it was in 1972, particularly in states like Florida and Texas. It is also more unified. (Remember McCloskey.) There may be a third party candidate who will drain votes from the Democrat.

And the President is a better man than Nixon, a better President and a better campaigner. Ronald Reagan defeated Pat Brown after Nixon had lost to him. He has never lost a general election campaign.

THE PRESIDENT CAN DO IT ALL—ALL HE HAS TO DO IS... GO FOR IT! ■

France

Continued from page 9

cendo of anti-Communism in the media, which Claude Julien in a long article just compared to the McCarthyism of 30 years ago.

In the first week in January, two consecutive TV evenings stood out. First, Yves Montand, adulated by his interviewers, raved on for hours against the left, delivering all the standard complaints that are becoming *common sense*, but delivering them with the old pro's charm and conviction. Montand has reacted with such vigor against the old PCF pretext for self censorship—"watch out or you'll play into the hands of the right"—that playing into the hands of the right has become his hallmark of honesty.

The next night, on a more lugubrious tone, there was "new philosopher" An-

dre Glucksmann going on for an hour and a half in defense of the free world's nuclear missiles. Glucksmann actually opened his broadcast by showing, in all seriousness, a World War II American propaganda film cartoon of the Three Little Pigs, with Hitler as the Big Bad Wolf, to illustrate that Europeans were defenseless "little pigs" protected by American Pershing and Cruise missiles.

Certainly, there is something old-fashioned about French Communists, but their enemies are not as "new" as they are cracked up to be. It is a myth that French intellectuals were mostly committed to left causes until they recently saw the light. One source of this myth is that only the minority of left-wing writers tend to be remembered by later generations.

Anti-Communism has many causes, including the behavior of the Communists themselves. The phenomenon cannot be reduced to a simple defense of the interests of finance capital, nor is it merely the latest intellectual fashion. Rather, there exists the strong intuition on the part of many people, especially in the successful middle classes, that Communist policies to save jobs and industry would require restraints that would cut France off from the U.S. and perhaps even from the rest of Western Europe and lead to a Soviet-style system—if not by emulation then by the same process of voluntaristic economic planning.

If Communist policies are the only ones potentially capable of salvaging French industry, many French people would rather sacrifice industry. France is a rich country whose way of life has never been as overtaken by industrialism as many other leading industrial countries. Thus a future is imaginable as a center of financial capital, of services, of luxury goods and a few choice high-tech products. Such a future requires maintaining excellent relations with the U.S., as the number one market for luxury goods and specialized production, as well as a necessary partner to help France maintain its overseas influence. ■

ANNOUNCING

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By Pat Aufderheide

WASHINGTON

ITEM: THE JAMAICA SOCIETY FOR the Blind used to be run like a country club, says present director Arvel Grant. "The lords and ladies got together as a social event and sent Christmas trees once a year." But then he and other blind people started joining the organization and serving on the board. Suddenly, "we weren't just agitators," he says. "We were administrators." These days the Society does "anything that will enable people to take greater control of their own lives," including granting blind people small loans. The money comes from a \$15,000 grant from the Inter-American Foundation, a semi-private U.S. agency.

ITEM: On an island in the middle of Lake Titicaca, high in the Peruvian Andes, there's a group of Indians famous for their weaving. But the world is not beating a path to their door, much less snarfing up their quaint artifacts at low prices. With the help of an ex-Peace Corps volunteer and an Inter-American Foundation grant, the people of Taquile are setting up a tourist industry on their own terms. They've formed coops to ferry tourists, sell textiles and even open restaurants.

ITEM: In Cochabamba, Bolivia, women sit placidly in the morning market, hawking tostadas and textiles. Some of them become, by afternoon, real-estate investors. They belong to a savings-and-loan coop comprised mostly of women, one that is building homes for its members on the city's margins. A Foundation grant provided the core of the loan fund.

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) is the kind of operation that makes a knee-jerk leftist twitch and a right-winger wince. This do-good foreign aid agency gives away money to seamstresses in Mexico and rural workers in Chile and to Indians in Paraguay, and establishes popular theater groups and folktale radio programs.

The IAF was set up in 1969 after congress members like Dante Fascell had taken a good look at the debris left by the Alliance for Progress, after the 1969 Rockefeller Report had announced that in Latin America "the U.S. has talked about partnership but it has not truly practiced it," and after Sen. Frank Church had said in congressional hearings that our foreign aid "has had the unfortunate tendency of identifying the U.S. with every kind of totalitarian regime imaginable and with very sour political consequences."

This was going to be something new: a foreign aid agency for Latin America that—unlike the Agency for International Development (AID)—was free of short-term politicking and one that would get money straight to poor people. Poverty, to congressional critics, seemed an excellent source of the discontent raging in the hemisphere. And so Congress created a semi-private agency, controlled by its board with three government and four private-sector members, all appointed by the president and with staggered terms.

It was most improbable, even in those salad days for social change. It seemed the U.S. had never extended a helping hand to Latin America without somehow turning it into a mailed fist.

There were blatant examples like the Hickenlooper Amendment to a 1963 foreign aid bill, which linked aid cut-offs to cancelled contracts with U.S. investors; or U.S. withholding of aid to a reformist government in Brazil in 1963, paving the way for military takeover; or the prompt offer of U.S. aid to Pinochet in Chile, after refusing it to Allende. And even friendly democratic aid seemed to turn into economic colonialism (Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico) or cosmetics for dictators (the Alliance for Progress' Civic Action Program, where the military was encouraged to brighten its image by doing visible public works projects).

"Most Latin Americans were deeply suspicious of this project when it was first set up," says Peter Bell, until December

president of the IAF. "I heard about it when I was still working for the Ford Foundation, and I had my suspicions."

Now, 1,600 grants and 13 years after it opened its doors, all those dark suspicions may finally be justified. Because the Reagan administration, as nervous about helping the poor overseas as it is at home, has finally engineered a takeover of what Rep. Robert Garcia (D-N.Y.) calls "the jewel of U.S. development programs." What's at stake is more than a few do-good projects and several tender hearts. This sabotaging of a tiny \$25 million agency—one with no friend in the monied lobbies and no home-town constituency—brings into question the quality of American political life.

Actually, there are two issues here. One is the consequence of turning foreign policy over to extremists. The Reagan administration has already prepared us for that—by storming Grenada, by militaristic policies in El Salvador and by refusing to negotiate with the pathetically eager-to-cooperate Nicaraguans. The other is the consequence of turning all government institutions into political footballs. The Reagan administration has prepared us for this, too, by doing to the Legal Services Corporation and the Civil Rights Commission what has just been done to the IAF.

Monday night, December 5. The IAF board meeting is dragging on, and members break for a makeshift buffet dinner. As Peter Bell takes a plate, board members Peter McPherson, head of AID, and William Middendorf, our representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), murmur to him. Then they go out into the hallway. When they return, rumors start to float: Bell's been asked to resign.

No sooner has the meeting resumed when McPherson abruptly calls for an executive session to discuss personnel issues. Both the staffers and the consultants—who have been hanging around waiting to present what is rumored to be a highly favorable assessment of the Foundation—are surprised. So are the two board members who are appointees from the Carter era. When one, Doris Holleb, a University of Chicago economics professor, demands a vote on whether to go into executive session, four Reagan-appointed board members carry it.

The rumors are right: Bell has been asked to quit.

Peter Bell is a mild-mannered man who exemplifies the phrase "proper Bostonian." Long-noted for his tact-filled blend of caution and integrity, he prepped for his HEW position in the Carter administration with years of work in Brazil and Chile with the Ford Foundation. He's been instrumental, in the last three years, in giving a seasoned-professional tone to the Foundation while maintaining its vigorous reputation for honesty and innovation. The IAF has the reputation among bureaucrats, congressional aides and consultants of being one of the best-run shops in town. Even the board members who ousted him couldn't think of any excuse but "chemistry" between him and the new board chairman.

So why was he fired—er, asked to resign?

Just take a look at who voted for his ouster.

TOP OF THE LIST: Victor Blanco, a small businessman (he sells medical equipment) and activist in the California Republican Hispanic Council. His expertise in Latin American affairs is personal; born in Cuba and educated as a veterinarian there, he immigrated to the U.S., becoming a citizen in 1961. A vocal opponent of the Castro government, he takes part in the Cuban-American community that Reagan cultivates for his "Hispanic vote." Nominated in September 1982, he was confirmed in Congress in December, replacing chair Peter Jones, a senior executive at Levi-Strauss and a Carter appointee.

FAST BEHIND: Langhorne A. Motley, ex-lobbyist for Alaskan land develop-

Continued on following page



Peter Bell was ousted in December as president of the Inter-American Foundation.

REAGAN'S POOR EXCUSE

In December, the administration engineered a take-over of the Inter-American Foundation, the "jewel" of U.S. development programs.

Continued from previous page

ers, ex-ambassador to Brazil (where he was the administration's best friend to the military government) and now assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs. He replaces Thomas Enders, who lost the board position permanently reserved for the assistant secretary when he lost his job. Described in the *Washington Post* as "a freewheeling and occasionally blunt advocate of Reagan administration policies," but by Rep. Garcia—to his face—as "one of the smoothest people I've ever met" and "a real piece of work," Motley is a coolly pragmatic, ambitious man. Lawrence Birns of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs summarizes journalistic scuttlebutt in saying he plans to be "the next senator from Alaska." He was a recess appointment last September.

IN LOCK STEP WITH HIS FRIENDS: Bill Middendorf, ex-secretary of the Navy and banker, the "jolly bland giant" who headed the CIA transition team for Reagan and who also composed his inaugural song "Thumbs Up, America!" Although he thirsted after the secretary of defense spot, Middendorf was widely regarded as just a little, uh, slow for the job. But he is enthusiastic. A British MP reported that in December 1982 Middendorf had told him he personally would be "delighted" to see the Nicaraguan regime overthrown with U.S. help. Now he's our representative to the Organization of American States, where he has described Nicaragua as "an increasingly totalitarian society." Like Motley, he was a recess appointment in September, replacing an earlier Reagan appointee who had been filling out the stub of a term.

The two recess appointments, by the way, set off enough rumors to make Sen. Mark Hatfield on behalf of "many members of Congress" write Reagan that it looked like the deck was being stacked to fire Bell, a move that would "constitute an act of political vengeance."

AND OLD FAITHFUL: M. Peter McPherson, a highly regarded figure in foreign affairs and administrator of the Agency for International Development. The bureaucrat's bureaucrat, he has a mild-mannered way of phrasing policy as improved management objectives. For instance, he envisions, he told Congress in January, a "strategic plan" to improve the IAF's communication with other agencies. AID has long had a natural tension with IAF, since AID would love to cut itself in on IAF's funds and contacts. Ever since the beginning of the Reagan administration, McPherson has been on a sort of probation to prove his loyalty. He was appointed in December 1981.

Another Reagan appointee sat in the room: Harold K. Phillips, a car salesman from Los Angeles, with a great fundraising and recruiting record for the California Republican Party. His international credentials are on the order of being Rotary International representative to El Salvador. Like Victor Blanco, he is proud to put the ex-public relations director of the John Birch Society, ex-congressman John Roussetot, on his resume's list of references. Also a recess appointment, he has yet to be approved in Congress. He sat out every vote.

He could afford to—the crucial big four were already there. The time and place were finally right for what IAF staffers are glumly calling a *golpe*, or coup, and not just because of the assembled votes. A few days before the critical board meeting, an outspoken critic of Reagan's Latin American policy, Rep. Clement Zablocki, had keeled over of a heart attack. Dante Fascell, the IAF's godfather and perennial booster, was suddenly in line for Zablocki's plum position as head of House Foreign Affairs Committee (which he got when Congress reconvened). So Zablocki's death not only knocked off a Reagan critic, but it also suddenly made for a more cautious friend in Fascell.

But this would have happened sooner or later; the maneuver was in the works for a long time. In the first days after the inaugural, Reagan called for all the

IAF's senior staff to resign. The practice for many politicians has never before applied to the other traditionally nonpartisan agencies.

"We thought it was a mistake," says Larry Slesinger, Bell's assistant. "The person who got the memo tossed it in the wastebasket. But then we found out they really meant it." It took formal protests from members of Congress, headed by Tip O'Neill, in a letter pointing out the Foundation's value and nonpartisan status, to cancel the request.

But why did Reagan even know about the Foundation? It's tiny, and only half its budget comes from Congress. (The other half comes from loan repayments made in the currency of the country by Latin American nations to the Inter-American Development Bank.)

He may have been tipped off by a group of friends, part of an informal network of anti-Soviet ideologues that floats from the CIA to right-wing think tanks to government appointments. Even before the inaugural, IAF was awaft with rumors that it had become a right-wing target. Then in November 1981 the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank and public policy department for the Reagan administration, issued a report written by Ettore DiGiovanni, an ex-CIA man who worked on the rural pacification program in Vietnam and later helped organize a similar one in El Salvador.

Two things terrify the man who wrote the Heritage Foundation report: social change and poor people. DiGiovanni wrote up to its ears with both. He warns at the start that the IAF is amok because "the staff was given a license to support projects designed to cause 'structural changes' in societies." He finds it has shown "antipathy toward authoritarian regimes" and that it has extended support "to groups influenced or managed by elements of the far left."

But aside from a couple of cases where the Foundation acknowledges a mistake—that is, that it funded something that turned out to have a political mission—and has cancelled the grants, DiGiovanni's conclusions rest on flimsy evidence and a widely inclusive definition of "left."

One of the sneakiest things the Foundation does, from DiGiovanni's perspective, is to fund culture. Paying ironic tribute to the effectiveness of cultural programs, he notes with alarm that endeavors like a film about a woman artisan's life (Colombia), a Jamaican theater group and popular theater in a Chilean slum "raise the consciousness level of the poor."

The people at the IAF think so too, only they think this is part of fostering economic health and democracy. Explains board member Phillips, "You only get real development through comprehensive development. When you're dealing with the poor, matters little—street cleaning, starting a dance group or a rice mill. People have to be proud of themselves, confident, in order to function in a democratic setting."

That may be precisely what terrifies the people at the Heritage Foundation. Certainly, DiGiovanni doesn't seem to trust democracy in action. He puts his faith in big-daddy business. The Foundation ought, he says, to "promote the concepts and practice of free enterprise" to the "lower levels of society." "Poor people," he writes, "can accurately identify the signs and symptoms of poverty, but not the etiology. It is fine to involve them in the development of projects but not to put them in charge. Local guidance would be better given by suitable local businessmen."

"The Heritage Foundation simply does not believe in poor people controlling their own lives," says Holleb. "We've been exciting about the IAF to me, to the social scientists, but we know very little about how to do social and economic development. We have something to learn from the people who come to the Foundation to get help in development they have initiated."



the truly poor."

The Heritage Foundation report concluded by making two recommendations. Sanitize the staff and board, wrote DiGiovanni, and force the IAF to link up more closely with other foreign policy arms of the government and cooperate with other aid organizations.

The second recommendation—one that violates the legislative history of the Foundation, which requires it to be "independent"—explains the second half of the December board meeting's late-night session. That was when the Big Four moved swiftly from dumping Bell to finding his replacement. A single name popped up, recommended as head of the search committee: Bill Doherty.

Bill Doherty. After you see him, you won't forget him. A big guy, florid and with a proud-to-be-Irish air. He's a survivor. And how. Doherty heads an organization with a notorious past—the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). This international wing of the AFL-CIO promotes free labor union activity internationally, which in practice means keeping the foreign proletariat from becoming dupes of Communism. In the '60s AIFLD had to admit to having been a conduit for CIA funds; it now gets 90 percent of its money from AID. After the Pinochet coup, AIFLD had to admit to Congress that it had worked with international business to destabilize the Allende regime in Chile.

Doherty has said that graduates of AIFLD programs were involved in covert operations leading to Brazil's 1964 military coup. Doherty is particularly proud of AIFLD's advising the Salvadoran government in its land reform program. These days conservative Congressman Orrin Hatch is touting AIFLD as a likely recipient for more of the taxpayers' millions. Why? Because, says a Hatch aide, an international union "has tremendous leverage for political activity compared to, say, CIA covert operatives."

AIFLD carries a longstanding grudge against the IAF. Dependent, like several other large private aid organizations, on government funds and contracts, AIFLD initially backed the creation of IAF. It was austerity-time in 1969 for private organizations as they watched dismayed legislators cut back trusty but crusty aid programs. Like many other groups, AIFLD anticipated a friendly future with IAF.

But within two weeks of opening its doors, the IAF was deluged with \$60 million of requests from such organizations. The board promptly dodged the whole question by ruling that the IAF would only consider funding grassroots Latin American organizations, and then only if they already existed and independently had sought out the IAF.

The people at AIFLD have never forgiven, never forgotten or even given up. As Doherty's press secretary Jack Heberle told me (Doherty was apparently too busy to talk to the press), AIFLD is upset because IAF refused to fund grassroots groups that AIFLD works with in Latin America.

What IAFers say, delicately, is that the appearance of integrity is just as important as the thing itself. And AIFLD comes with an unsavory reputation. "Have you ever been to one of their parties in Latin America?" asks a tired, worried scholar who depends on the ray of respectability IAF has brought to our international relations. "It's always this collection of the rich, the shady, the international movers—exactly the American image that Latin Americans most distrust. You can't afford to be seen with them."

Bill Doherty? When the name came up, it left the two Carter appointees nonplussed. Doherty wasn't even associated with the IAF. How could someone who wasn't on the advisory council or the board suddenly head up a search committee? One of the Reagan appointees quickly moved to make Doherty head of the advisory council; suddenly everyone was talking at once. In the end, Doherty

Continued on page 22

There are two issues here: one is the consequence of turning foreign policy over to extremists; the other is the consequence of turning all government institutions into political footballs.

The thick and ponderous Heritage Foundation report at points makes one wonder: What are these people so terribly afraid of? A clue comes from a conversation ex-board chair Peter Jones reported in congressional hearings in November. He recalled saying to DiGiovanni that most poor weren't pro-Marxist, but that they just wanted a break. Helping them, Jones argued, fostered democratic institution-building.

And he recalled DiGiovanni replying, "No. As soon as anything happens and there is any East-West involvement, the minute the Cubans or the Russians get involved, the whole country polarizes. You are either for us or against us."

Given that absolutist outlook, it's probably no wonder DiGiovanni is also alarmed by the IAF's support for human rights activities. He notes IAF's grants to legal aid societies and publications, including some in Chile and in Peru. And he points with concern to publicity-getters such as a Washington, D.C., conference in March 1981, where Latin Americans made remarks "openly hostile to the U.S."

That was too much for Rep. Garcia, representative from the poorest district in the U.S. "In the south Bronx we have anti-American statements being made,"

he pointed out in September congressional hearings. In his district, he said, "many situations are very similar to many of these Spanish-speaking countries." And then and there, Garcia invited the Foundation to come work in the south Bronx.

A mountain of innuendo in the Heritage report added to a devastating charge, one bordering on treason. The IAF, DiGiovanni included, "has developed an operational philosophy...not only incompatible with the philosophy of the Reagan administration but [which] also has aspects that are inconsistent with traditional bipartisan foreign policy objectives of the U.S." The fact that the IAF had not violated Carter foreign policy only clinched the point, in his opinion.

But if guilt is shown by association then there are a lot of guilty parties in two political parties. After the administration tried to slash the IAF's budget in 1981, a bipartisan Senate Appropriations Committee gave it a rave review and recommendation for budget hike. After a Republican committee headed by Rep. Jack Kemp gave a dismal rating to our foreign aid programs in 1981, it noted that the IAF, by contrast, had been "extremely effective at reaching

Many IAF projects drew fire from the Heritage Foundation's Cleto DiGiovanni, who fretted that IAF funding "helped raise the consciousness level of the poor."

Photos by Mitchell Denberg

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

RICHARD FLACKS' REVIEW OF DEREK Shearer and Martin Carnoy's new book *A New Social Contract* (ITT, Jan. 11) lucidly summarizes what these authors mean by "economic democracy"—their hope for a new third way for American economic health, as opposed to Reaganomics or exhausted liberal Keynesianism.

There is nothing new here. The idea of economic democracy is more than a century old. It is used in the Socialist International's Frankfurt Declaration of 1951. Diluted forms have been practiced in the social democratic nations and in a truer form in Yugoslavia for decades. The Socialist Party of America has been campaigning for it since its beginning.

Shearer and Carnoy's use of the term economic democracy is only distinguished by this: it is even more diluted than what is meant by it in Western Europe where it is also known as workers' co-management or co-determination. One of the principle features is Shearer and Carnoy's avoidance of the mention of socialism.

Yet I share their optimism for the prospect of economic democracy in the U.S. Our historical pattern has been to swing to the left, then partially back to the right, and then further than before to the left approximately every 30 years. I expect the current right-wing rollback to end in the '90s. In that decade, I expect we will move beyond Great Society liberalism and into a social democratic era.

Shearer and Carnoy look to the Democratic Party for this process. But I see few of the Democratic leaders today willing to embrace these concepts. They seem more centrist than ever before. Mondale's policies on increased arms spending and social budget cuts seem similar to Reagan's. Perhaps a new gen-

eration of Democratic Party leaders will embrace these ideas, but not without considerable resistance from the big business contributors to the Democratic candidates. A more likely avenue to promote the ideas of economic democracy are the traditional socialist parties and newer populist or labor parties. Of course, our electoral system is weighted against third parties, but the times may so strongly demand change that these hindrances will be overcome.

—Donald F. Busky
Local Chairperson, Socialist Party
of Greater Philadelphia

SOVIET LIFE

IFOUND THE GERALD EVANS LETTER (ITT, Jan. 11) in which he says he is "proud to consider [him]self an American socialist," but calls the USSR a fascist state particularly disturbing. One expects such statements on a letters page. But there is little in *In These Times* to convince him that he is wrong—nothing positive about the Soviet Union. The most one gets is attacks on American rightists when they equate Russia with Big Brother, or admissions that Russia really does have something to fear from the U.S. Why this silence? Why have detailed accounts of life in China, Poland, Cuba, Vietnam, but practically no accounts of the Soviet system? When, on the same letters page, I read William Mandel's letter about voluntary Soviet pullbacks after WWII and the first positive account of the Czechoslovakian invasion I've encountered, I began wondering why such ideas—or a discussion of such ideas—don't appear on other pages.

I probably would have dismissed Mandel as a misguided Communist had I not earlier come across Farley Mowat's *The Siberians* and read, in a book that seems fair, a very different picture of the Soviet Union than that we are raised on. Having heard only about political oppression and economic disarray, I wasn't prepared for the ac-

counts of the extensive letters columns in *Pravda* or worker elections in factories. One doesn't have to whitewash the faults of the Soviet Union to talk about its successes with equality for women and cultural autonomy for its indigenous populations (in both areas it surpasses the U.S.). What we get from *In These Times* is implicit dismissal—so that in one issue a writer had to carefully demonstrate that Nicaragua is not tainted by aid from the USSR. (I would think less of the Soviets if they did not give aid to Nicaragua.)

—Robin Bates
St. Mary's City, Md.

Editor's note: We would very much like to report on life in the Soviet Union, but have been unable to find anyone knowledgeable and balanced to write for us. We know the Soviet Union has made great gains for its people. Nevertheless, the essence of socialism is popular sovereignty, while the Soviet Union is a closed society in which one party has a monopoly on power.

CONCESSIONS

DAVID MOBERG'S REVIEW (ITT, JAN. 25) of Jane Slaughter's book and the publication of the Workers' Policy Project dealing with concessions underestimates management's commitment to class warfare. Suggesting that trading concessions is a possible job-saving strategy ignores the fact that the conciliatory approach has put us in our current untenable position.

Moberg correctly notes that "we do still live in a competitive, capitalist world." I assume he's committed to changing that situation. If the two works in question offer inadequate solutions to the management assault on workers they are still valuable simply because they recognize that given the corporate imperative to maximize profit, the ultimate question is one of control of the economy.

As a Greyhound worker recently victimized by an all-out corporate union-busting campaign, I think grudging "advice on how to make the best of a bad situation" is more realistic than the kind of self-congratulation we're getting from our leadership because we've still got a union after conceding almost 20 percent in wages and benefits along with total amnesty for scabs.

Greater commitment to a fighting strategy by our union before our contract negotiations began might have avoided the recent Greyhound disaster. Recognizing that the struggle can't really be won by accommodating ourselves to an opposition bent on our total subjugation should give more careful consideration.

—Gershon Mayer
Chicago

MORE CONCESSIONS

IN HIS REVIEW OF *CONCESSIONS AND How to Beat Them* (ITT, Jan. 25), David Moberg is concerned that the notion that unions should make contract concessions in return for "a more democratic reorganization of work" has not been given enough thought. But in the process of researching and writing the book I gave the matter a great deal of consideration—and my thoughtful conclusions were different from Moberg's.

Moberg may remember that this question was debated at the Labor Notes conference on concessions in November 1982. In that discussion, several left writers were taken to task by a UAW local union president for implying that concessions could be turned into their opposite by winning some control over the companies in return.

The idea sounds nice on paper, but all past and present evidence shows it is a loser. *Concessions* presents an analysis of the forces that have produced the current balance of power between employers and unions. We do not have powerful unions meekly being asked for help by sickly companies. The labor movement has been greatly weakened by the force Moberg mentions—inter-

national competition—as well as others—deregulation, automation and the building of huge conglomerates. To suggest that weakened unions can make unprecedented gains by displaying more weakness flies in the face of everything the labor movement has learned.

Moberg is correct to say that it is difficult to point to successful examples of his strategy, but he is wrong to say that it has not been tried much. Many unions have claimed at the outset that their concessions contracts would usher in a new era of labor participation in management, only to discover that management treated the union with even less respect than before.

The Steelworkers' 1983 contract, for example, was supposed to guarantee reinvestment in the domestic steel industry. I believe *In These Times* readers are familiar with the way steel employers have continued to close mills, eliminate jobs through speed-ups and generally make a mockery of the union's desire for "participation."

The Machinists' new contract with Eastern Airlines, the product of much research into Eastern's financial condition, leaves control of corporate decisions firmly in management hands, despite an array of joint labor-management advisory committees.

The labor movement *should* be a "vehicle for workers usurping more and more control over the workplace, investment and society." But collapsing at the bargaining table is not a means to that end.

—Jane Slaughter
Detroit

MISSING FARMS

IDO ENJOY *IN THESE TIMES*, BUT THERE is at least one area in which your reporting and analysis is severely lacking. That area is the continuing economic crisis in our rural areas and especially with our nation's family farms. Our family farm system is being actively destroyed, and with it go our rural communities, our practice of stewardship and conservation of the soil and any semblance of well-distributed ownership of land in this country. Record numbers of family farmers are being driven off the land as production costs and interest rates soar, while farm prices have plunged to their lowest levels since the Depression.

What also goes unrecognized by *In These Times* is the strong, progressive, grassroots response to this continuing crisis. In several states, citizen action organizations have begun actively organizing with family farmers and rural residents on such issues as foreclosure moratorium, minimum pricing legislation, stopping the decontrol of natural gas and reforming tax laws that discriminate against small farms. In Minnesota, the statewide citizen organization Minnesota COACT (Citizens' Organizations Acting Together) has brought together low and moderate income people from both the city and rural areas to work on social and economic justice issues. In 1982, COACT fought for and won the first foreclosure moratorium legislation passed in any state since the Depression. COACT and other farm organizations are well on their way to winning passage of minimum pricing legislation in the upcoming session of the Minnesota Legislature.

This grassroots movement to save family farms and rural communities has exciting implications for drawing together small family farmers with other low- and moderate-income people to work on a broader agenda of economic justice.

—Jeff Blodgett
COACT Farm Organizer
Little Falls, Minn.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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SHANGHAI JOURNAL



Searching for clues in Mao celebration

By Henry Rosemont Jr.

IN DECEMBER THE CHINESE people celebrated the 90th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong. Many large portraits were brought out of storage for the occasion, flags were flown, radio, television and the newspapers featured accounts of his life, a new set of commemorative stamps was issued and book shops did a brisk business selling works by and about him.

It was a memorable event. Propaganda was not absent from the chronicles of his life, but even the most jaded Westerner or Chinese who saw them would have to admit that this man leaped rather than marched through modern Chinese history. He was at the founding of China's successful revolutionary party; with Sun Yat Sen; on the Northern Expedition; establishing the first Chinese soviet; leading the Long March; fighting the Japanese for eight years while organizing the North Chinese peasantry; at the heart of the Civil War, 1945-49; on the podium in 1949 announcing with unconcealed pride that "China has stood up"; and more or less at the helm of that China for the next quarter-century, more or less responsible for the progress, backsliding, joys, sorrows and much else that has gone into the making of the history of the People's Republic.

The following day most of the portraits came down again, flags were furled, the media resumed regular programming and post offices and book shops took up business as usual.

Most significant about the celebration was how little political significance it seemed to have; rather it had all the trappings of an historically oriented cultural affair.

Of greater political significance was the perspective on the day's activities given afterward by the Western media, such as

Newsweek. In these accounts, the events of the day were fraught with political implications, described in a manner to provide slam-bang, hit-'em-between-the-eyes "news" to promote sales and distrust of the Chinese leadership.

Newsweek's reporters found it important to note that "the anniversary celebrations pointedly did not include" any urgings to re-read the sayings of Mao current during the Cultural Revolution. The perversity of such reporting would be obvious if the subject matter were not Mao and China, but, say, Lincoln and the U.S. All of the documentary celebrations of Abe's life I recall included the solemn intonation of the address at Gettysburg or his second inaugural speech. All of these "pointedly did not include" his formal statement suspending the writ of *habeas corpus*. But when dealing with

NEWSWEEK noted that "the celebrations pointedly did not include" any urgings to re-read the sayings of Mao.

China, anything goes, including such "pointed" observations; and the more Fu Manchuish the image drawn, the better.

Similarly, *Newsweek* explains the strong revival of interest in Mao's life as either "designed to co-opt any real Maoist resurgence," or as "a characteristic Peking effort to make the past—or a version of it—fit the present." Sandwiched in between these political analyses is a reference to Deng Xiaoping's caution that Mao not be criticized excessively, because "to do so and smear Comrade Mao would be to smear our party and our state."

To me, Deng's statement is obviously true, no matter what one's personal opinion of Mao.

According to *Newsweek*, however, no Chinese leader's statements should be taken at face value; there must always be a hidden political significance. Deng, therefore, could not merely be acknowledging that he is an historical giant tracking—in his own way—the footsteps of a much larger historical giant. Rather he must be engaged in major ideological combat with (unnamed) opponents, or he is engaged in a fabrication of history. In either case, a thinly veiled Fu Manchu image is again conjured up.

Once more from *Newsweek*, in the same vein: "The party is putting a Dengist stamp on Mao's thought," says a Peking-based diplomat. "Mao can't be rejected so he is being redefined."

(Digression: it is now common knowledge that the majority of the diplomatic corps in Beijing is on the verge of open revolt at the isolated treatment they claim to receive from the Chinese; yet a goodly number of the sources cited by the Western media in articles about China are "Peking-based diplomats.")

Part of what the (unnamed) diplomat says is true: Mao can't be rejected. But it is possible to say the same thing in another tone of voice: of course the Chinese cannot reject the life of a man who exercised a major influence not only in the political realm, but in the intellectual, literary and cultural life of China for more than 50 years. Every reflective Chinese now and for many generations to come will make an effort to take a full measure of that life.

In fact, the current leadership's political perspective on Mao's actions and writings has been well known here for some time. In June 1981, at the sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee meetings, an "authoritative assessment" of Mao was officially adopted and has been widely read at political studies meetings ever since.

This assessment has Mao's record from 1921 through 1957 as virtually unblemished and exemplary. For his efforts during the "Great Leap Forward" (1958-61) he received some criticism, but good marks in general.

Of his activities during the final decade of his life the judgments are harsher:

"The 'cultural revolution,' which lasted from May 1966 to October 1976, was responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state and the people since the founding of the People's Republic. It was initiated and led by Comrade Mao Zedong."

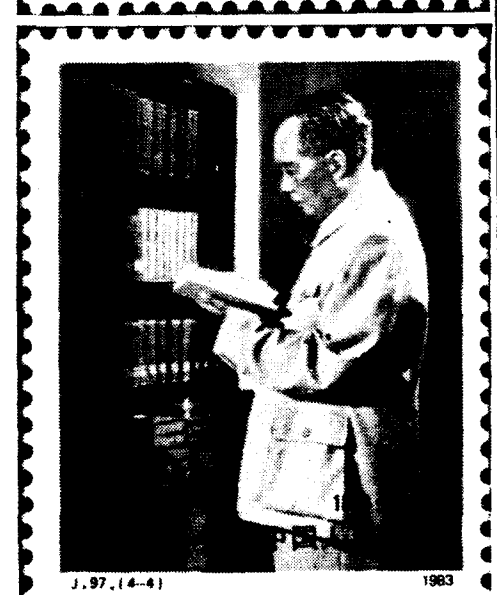
Further, as the Cultural Revolution progressed, Mao "began to get arrogant," and "gradually divorced himself from practice and from the masses," at the same time "acting more and more arbitrarily and subjectively."

Strong words. The official assessment gives more praise than blame to Mao overall, but the blame is central to the account, not peripheral. Thus, if the birthday celebrations are seen as solely reflective of current political thinking, why were they so extensive and massive, and why did they "pointedly...include" any criticism of Mao. All of the events of the day were positive, focusing on his life and work from birth through the early years of the People's Republic.

His mausoleum has now been expanded to include memorials to Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Liu Shaoqi. That the latter died of neglect in prison after Mao denounced him is not mentioned in Liu's tribute, an omission that *Newsweek* describes at length. But, like Mao, the lives of Zhou, Zhu, Liu and many others were inextricably tied to the Chinese Revolution, a half-century of successive cataclysmic events. Until their lives recede further into the past, a balanced evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses is hardly to be expected.

Against a larger, less cynical perspective, we might see the simple fact of Mao and Liu being honored under the same roof as significant: the re-dedication of Mao's resting place—along with all of the other events of December 26—suggest that the party is becoming sufficiently mature to begin facing its own history realistically, and to appreciate that the major figures in that history belong not to the party, but to China. To me this is a healthy sign. For as Mao was fond of quoting from an ancient Chinese tale, "A journey of a thousand li begins with a single step."

Henry Rosemont Jr. is professor of philosophy at St. Mary's College in Maryland. He is currently teaching at Fudan University in Shanghai.



This set of four commemorative stamps picture Mao as a young scholar; in fatigues at Yanan; surveying the Chinese landscape in a philosophical pose; and in his library with a book in his hands. These stamps are typical of the image of Mao presented at his anniversary.

By Beth Stephens & Maggi Popkin

JAMES FELTZ IS A U.S.-BORN parish priest in Bocana de Paiwas, located in a remote mountainous section of central Nicaragua. His parish consists largely of peasants who have been coming together to work in cooperatives since the revolution ousted Somoza in July 1979. Their efforts have been met by counterrevolutionary terror: leading members of the community have been threatened and killed, cooperatives attacked and houses burned.

In late August and September 1983, a counterrevolutionary task force attacked four of the outlying communities of the parish killing 20 people. Father Feltz has been working with his parishioners to rebuild their lives after these attacks. Just before Christmas, we visited Father Feltz in Bocana de Paiwas and talked to him about his community, the counterrevolutionary attacks and the people's response.

Could you tell us something about the community where you work?

I have been working in Bocana de Paiwas in Zelaya Central for the last two years and three months. Paiwas is in the heart of the country but is very isolated. The municipality has a total population of 43,000 divided into 33 *comarcas* (townships). Most of these can be reached only by mountain trails or, part of the year, by boat.

This area is part of what is called the agricultural frontier. Poor *campesinos* move east in this country, chopping away at the rain forest, making their living by clearing the land and selling it to bigger fellows who use it for grazing land for ranches. The people in my parish are on the cutting edge of this movement to the east. They live a very tenuous existence, just by raising crops for their own consumption, principally beans and corn. They are very poor people—most of them don't know how to read and write.

Has the revolution had an effect on the people in your parish?

In these two years, I have seen progress in education and health as well as efforts to increase production through organization and the formation of cooperatives. The advances the people have made since the revolution have given them hopes of bettering their lot—of organizing themselves better and raising their level of education through adult education programs, with the participation and support of rural teachers who were assigned to the area.

Quite noticeable advances had been made in the area until the counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) started attacking the very people who were participating in these programs. At the end of August and the beginning of September, we had the biggest setback to these programs when a counterrevolutionary task force attacked and killed 20 members of my parish.

Could you describe the attack?

The group that recently came into Paiwas consisted of 350 well-armed men with new uniforms and 100-150 *campesinos* carrying their packs for them—generally against their will. The counterrevolutionaries identified themselves as having come from Honduras and being supplied by the Reagan administration. They had infiltrated from the northern border, which must be a week's march or more.

The trip I made to the *comarcas* after the events of last September was one of the saddest trips I had made. I visited the four *comarcas* that had been attacked by the *contras*. In El Guayabo I saw the houses that had been burned. I saw the fear in the faces of people who were meeting in the chapel.

I also talked with some of the victims, including 10-year-old Cristina Borge. Her crime had been that she was visiting her uncle, a distributor of sugar, when the *contras* attacked. After she had been terrorized by what they were doing to other people at the house—including her uncle who was shot and killed—she was used for target practice by the *contras*. First one of them shot at her from horseback and missed; then he ordered someone else

to shoot at her while she lay on the ground. Miraculously, she lived, though she received four wounds.

I visited Las Minillas and saw the charred ruins of the houses where 2,000 *cordobas* of clothes from the women's cooperative of Paiwas went up in smoke in the attack. I was told how one of the leading women of the community had the top of her head blown off at close range.

Part of the trip I made was spent talking to people who had been taken against their will to carry the 80-pound knapsacks and munitions of the *contra* task force. The *contras* would move in, terrorize the people and then order some of them to go along with them to serve as pack animals. They were forced to move with the invading force, day after day, with very little to eat, and always at peril of being killed if the *contras* suspected that they wanted to escape—if they were not moving fast enough or if they would in any way put the task force in danger. All but one of the people taken along in this way were able to escape in the confusion when the task force was attacked by the Sandinista army that went into the area to control this penetration. The *campesinos* were able to make their way painfully back.

They also described the cowardly fear that the *contras* had of any armed resistance. They showed their bravura when they came up against defenseless *campesinos*, but when they had to confront the Sandinistas they were routed fairly readily, even though they outnumbered the Sandinista forces.

Had there been previous attacks by CONTRAS in your area?

There was an attack in Malacaguas in January of this year when eight people were killed. These were members of a cooperative who were attacked because they



PERSPECTIVES

Eyewitness: Priest recounts contra raid in Nicaragua

were members of a cooperative. That cooperative was practically destroyed, but it's recently started to live and get organized again.

Could you describe what this cooperative was trying to do before it was attacked?

It was a cooperative that was given some land to work, if not own right now because the agrarian reform has not yet moved into the area. They were allotted some land that they could cultivate, so they were growing beans and corn. The idea was to take some of the beans out of the area to sell so that they would have some cash income. Now the idea is to start up a pig farm on the same cooperative.

How have the more recent attacks affected your parish?

The task force that moved in during August and September burned 18 houses, destroying the income of the people there—even destroying their machetes and the stones the women use to grind their corn. This leaves them totally dependent.

Anybody who is moving is in danger in the sense that he may be questioned and challenged by the *contras* as to why he's moving and where he's going and if he's going to tell the police or the military where they are. There is a great deal of fear even to move on the mountain trails. This has an economic effect by making what little business they carry on still more complicated.

Another economic dimension results

from people having to leave their farms and flee the areas, leaving their animals behind. They can't take them out, and even if they flee for only two weeks or a month, the animals are stolen or wander off. It's a very poor area. People may have an effective salary of 2,000 *cordobas* a year (about \$70), because they sell four pigs from their farm—that's their only cash income. Without the pigs, they have no possibility of any kind of cash income.

Other economic damage that was done in the recent attack included the malicious burning of the outboard motor that belonged to a transportation cooperative. Motorboats are vital for transportation in the area as well as for the distribution of sugar. People in the countryside are given their ration of sugar, but it has to be transported up there and the riverboat was the means of transporting the sugar into the outlying areas. The *contras*, realizing this and doing everything they could to hurt the economy and make the government look bad, tried to destroy the

boat and burned a \$3,000 outboard motor.

Have the CONTRAS been going into the communities with specific targets?

The way I see it, they had a list of people they were going after—people who were organized, people who were active, people who were leaders.

How is the morale of people in the townships at this point?

Surprisingly, after the first shock wave demoralized people, they have reacted positively, organizing themselves better for defense. This includes a change in their lifestyle. Instead of living separated a half hour apart, the Sandinistas are encouraging them to live close together. Gradually, the idea is taking root and people are coming to live in small villages for their own defense. This facilitates health and education as well as the distribution of basic goods like soap and sugar.

How is the parish involved in organizing the people?

In order to give an economic basis to this coming together, we are starting a project to set up six cooperative pig farms in the townships that have been hit the hardest. Every cooperative will be organized to take care of health and education of the children and the adults and also for the distribution of sugar and the other necessities. The idea is to better the production of pigs in the area. There is a scarcity of meat and pigs. There's an overproduction of corn that can't be taken out—it just rots in the fields and it could be fed to the pigs. But the technology of scientific production hasn't been put into practice by the *campesinos* in the area.

They currently raise a breed of pigs you have to feed four times as much as another breed. The *campesinos* will go off to receive some training on a pig farm run by the state. Then they will come back and organize their own pig farm, adapting the technique to their area as it is impossible for them to raise pigs here the same way.

We can't continue to go on organizing their chapels if the people are starving to death. Organizing and building up their farms is a basic need because the people live a very marginal existence and they have been hit pretty hard. They can't lift themselves up by their own bootstraps anymore. They've been doing it for so long in spite of such hardships, because of the economic crisis in the country and their own marginalization from income. You have to have an economic base. That's what the parish is about—protecting life.

Have you experienced any problems as a Catholic priest in Nicaragua?

As far as I can see, the persecution of the Church in Nicaragua has been principally by the *contras*. As far as my own ability to move freely around the area where I work, I've never been harassed by the Sandinistas—only by the *contras*. This is the same for fellow missionaries in the area, whether in Waslala or Siuna or Rosita, where just recently they almost killed [Capuchin priest] Agustin Sambolo as he was driving to one of his parishes up there. At the beginning of November, [Capuchin] father Francisco Solano was on a mission trip in the southern part of Zelaya and was detained and threatened with death if he would in any way support the Sandinista process.

Note: On January 3, we received a message from James Feltz reporting that 10 more members of his parish had been killed by *contras* since this interview. ■

Beth Stephens is an American lawyer working in Nicaragua. Maggi Popkin, also a lawyer, recently returned from two months of research in Nicaragua.

"They had a list of people they were going after—people who were organized, people who were active..."

—Father James Feltz

DIALOG

Zionist-Nazi tie is a smear

By Harold Karabell

LENNI BRENNER (IN *THESE TIMES*, Jan. 18) apparently thinks that by linking the Stern Gang with European fascism he is scoring points against Israeli sovereignty and providing legitimation for "a democratic secular Palestine." He accomplishes nothing of the sort. No necessary political conclusions follow from Brenner's indictments of the LECHI (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, or Stern Gang).

Brenner could have cited other "evidence" as well. In 1948, for example, Albert Einstein and Hannah Arendt (among others) wrote in the *New York Times* that "among the most disturbing political phenomena of our time is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the Freedom Party (ha Herut), a political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties. It was formed out of the membership of the former Irgun Zvai Leumi, a terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organization in Palestine."

Even casual students of Zionism know the source of the complaints. The Irgun (or ETZEL) drew much of its leadership from the Revisionist Zionist movement founded by Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky. At the heart of Revisionist doctrine was an unequivocal call for a Jewish state and militant opposition to the mandatory's partition of "the homeland" in 1922 and the creation of a small Jewish state envisioned by the Peel Plan of 1937.

The school for many of Jabotinsky's closest disciples—among them Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir—was their youth organization Betar, which resembled many inter-war fascist youth groups in ideology and ritual. Although Jabotinsky formally eschewed links with fascism, many of his followers did not.

Jabotinsky, out of desperation, also negotiated with Petliura, an extreme Ukrainian nationalist who headed a government-in-exile in Paris during the '20s. A notorious anti-Semite, Petliura directed bloody pogroms against Ukrainian Jews during the Russian civil war. Yet when Petliura hatched his scheme for a Polish-sponsored invasion of the Ukraine, Jabotinsky offered to help in return for setting up of a Jewish self-defense force in the "liberated" territory.

This complex and often ugly history is well known. The anti-British terrorism of LECHI also is well documented. So, too, is the Irgun massacre of the Arab inhabitants of Deir Yassin in 1948. This should not be forgotten. But it is not the damning political revelation that Brenner makes it out to be. Less remembered today is the Marxist Hashomer Hatzair's emphasis on a binational state within all of mandatory Palestine. This left-wing Zionist position, based on a belief in the compatibility of class interests between Palestinian *fellaheen* and Jewish workers, severely underestimated the intensity of nationalist sentiment.

Betar's commitment to fascism may be debatable, but not the record of some Palestinians. Haj Amin al Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem and an important symbol of Palestinian nationalism in the mandatory period, was a moving force behind the violent Arab revolt of 1937-39, and finally fled in exile to Berlin where he became a close collaborator with the Nazis and a vigorous public supporter of Hitler's war effort. Other Arab nationalists were also attracted to the Axis during the war, subsequently to embrace the Soviets and some form of socialism.

These examples could be multiplied many times. People anxious to denounce Israeli sovereignty—Brenner among them—may delight in finding out about "Shamir's Thugs." But they should remember about the thugs among the Palestinian national movement—one wants to ask Brenner and other writers for their opinion of Abu Nidal, Abu Musa and Ahmad Jibril, among others.

Rather than using selective "history" to score points for one side or the other, how much better to remember the example of Natan Yalin-Mor. Yalin-Mor was a member of the Central Committee of the Revisionist Party in Poland in 1941. But Yalin-Mor's anti-imperialism took him on a political odyssey very different from that of Yitzhak Shamir.

Shortly after the 1967 war, Yalin-Mor called for the establishment of a Mideast federation, "to be composed of the State of Israel and an Arab state that will satisfy the desire of the Palestinian Arab people for a national and political identity." (This refers to Israel's pre-1967 borders.) Yalin-Mor believed the creation of such a federation—with Jerusalem as its shared capital—would "make it possible for the first time to divert the tremendous military budget to peaceful development and will mark the beginning of a new era...of

well-being, economic prosperity and cultural flowering for the whole region."

It also would be well to remember the example of Issam Sartawi. Sartawi, as committed a Palestinian nationalist as any, underwent his own odyssey from terrorism to the politics of peace with justice. Sartawi first became active in Palestinian politics as the head of the Action Organization for the Liberation of Palestine, a small group of *fedayeen*. But while he never accepted the legitimacy of Zionism, Sartawi became the outstanding voice within the Palestine National Council—the highest decision-making body of the PLO—for mutual recognition and the creation of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza. For this realistic position, Sartawi was murdered, like his colleague Saad Hammami before him, by Abud Nidal's gangsters.

Yasir Arafat also seems to have accepted the wisdom of his late friend and now has broken with the rejectionist front in the PLO. This now puts Arafat in a clear position to work closely with the moderate Palestinian leadership in the Occupied Territories, which issued a denunciation of violence and a plea for mutual recognition in the wake of the attack on Bus #18 in Jerusalem last month.

Brenner and others no doubt will reject

the legacy of Yalin-Mor as simply another "Zionist-racist-imperialist conspiracy" while labelling the politics of Sartawi and now Arafat as "deviationist and opportunist betrayals." But such attitudes ensure continued slaughter of Palestinians and Israelis by official and unofficial terror.

Extremism on this issue is no threat whatsoever to the current Israeli government. Rejectionism in the Mideast is a mutually reinforcing game. In truth, Abu Musa (the rejectionist military commander of the revolt in Fatah and butcher of the Bedawii refugee camp) is the best recommendation for Sharon and Shamir, just as Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories seem almost calculated to create a new generation of recruits for the PFLP. What the Israeli government fears most are voices of realism and moderation among the Palestinians and their Arab "allies." This explains the government's almost paranoid dismissal of several elected West Bank mayors, whose only "crime" was to identify with the voices of compromise within the PLO.

Those with a genuine commitment to peace and justice in the Mideast should follow the examples of Yalin-Mor and Sartawi. The Israeli peace camp urgently needs (and wants) American support (*ITT*, Jan. 18), yet the U.S. government seems unaware of its existence. As Americans, we have the obligation to reject the rejectionists and instead do what we can to nurture the peace camp among both Palestinians and Israelis. This includes pressuring our government to go well beyond the "Reagan Plan" (even this is unacceptable to the current Likud government) and to insist on a real recognition of Palestinian national aspirations. As leftists of one sort or another, we have the obligation to ensure that ours is a left of the olive branch, not of the gun. ■

But historical links make sense of current events

By James Houseworth-Findlay

A. ROBERT KAUFMAN'S "Dialog" (*In These Times*, Jan. 18) was so filled with historical distortions that I feel compelled to respond. First,

the claim that the Zionist project in Palestine was essential to Jewish survival—and that indignities suffered by Palestine Arabs were therefore justified—is untrue. All the Western allies purposely kept immigration quotas for Jews low, even when the Holocaust became known, and Zionist leaders, during the war and after, fought all attempts to raise quota levels. To them, the settlement project in Palestine took precedence over all other matters. Even most Jewish refugees from the genocide ended up in Russia rather than in the West or Palestine. Menachem Begin, in his book *The Revolt*, thanks Stalin and the Soviets for this aid.

Stating that the choice for Jews was Palestine or self-destruction is another distortion. During Zionism's early years, Theodore Herzl and others explored the possibility of founding a Jewish state in Uganda, eastern Libya or Argentina. Palestine was ultimately chosen for two reasons: Britain's willingness to sponsor "a loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of hostile Arabism," and the propaganda value of settling on land the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe considered sacred—land to which Herzl and other agnostic Zionist leaders were either indifferent or contemptuous.

To claim that early Zionists were "fair, just and giving to a disadvantaged people" is ridiculous. Obviously Kaufman knows nothing of "socialist" Zionists who led boycotts of Arab laborers and products, or of others who murdered a Jewish activist in 1924 because he was organizing Jews and Arabs to unite and resist colonization, or of those who joined the infamous Night Squad, which bru-

talized Arab peasants and was led by a British anti-Semite. True, the Zionist project increased technology and capital in Palestine, and thus increased the Arabs' standard of living. But one could say that the standard of living is higher for blacks in South Africa and for Native Americans because of the "benefits" of imperialism. Does this justify oppression?

I never claimed that Zionists stole the land of Palestine, as Kaufman thinks. However, land purchases did lead to widespread evictions and misery. This issue is complex; perhaps I was wrong to try and deal with it succinctly. In any case, *Zionism: False Messiah* by Nathan Weinstock gives a thorough and coherent history of Zionism, Palestine and the Jewish Question up to 1948 and might clear up Kaufman's misconceptions.

On the matter of Kaufman's charge that I cited "esoteric details," any person who knows the media also knows that historical details remain esoteric and little-known because it is in the interests of the powerful to keep such things hidden from public view. Is it "grave and meaningless" to expose links between Zionists and fascists? I think not. It helps us understand how Zionism developed (without Nazi goods and the Ha'avara, the Zionist project may well have failed for economic reasons during the Depression), why Israel was so closely linked with the Shah of Iran and the Somozas, and why, propped up by massive U.S. aid, it maintains close ties with South Africa, Guatemala and other oppressive regimes today.

Kaufman's contention that since "nearly everyone" collaborated with the Nazis, it proves "not a damned thing," simply boggles my mind. To me it proves that no major organization or government in the '30s had the moral or political courage to reject, boycott or otherwise effectively oppose Hitler before he plunged the world into darkness. One only need read the tragic story of Leon Trotsky and the way German Communists

and others laughed off his calls to unite against Hitler to see the bankruptcy and hypocrisy of most so-called "socialists." I do not demand that Zionists live under a different standard—all the Western democracies and left parties share guilt. But the fact remains: certain Zionists and certain Nazis worked together at various times, and knowledge of this aids us in understanding the past and present.

Kaufman's statement that the U.S. joined in on Israel's birth at the last minute ignores the historical record: with the Biltmore Declaration of the early '40s, the Zionist movement under Ben-Gurion began to cultivate the Washington connection. The Zionists foresaw, quite correctly, that Britain was fading during the war, and that the U.S. would emerge as the dominant world power once the carnage stopped. Stalin's early support for Israeli statehood only reveals him to be as much in search of a Mideast satellite as the Western powers.

The whole question of Zionism and racism is difficult and impossible to deal with briefly. However, Israel Shahak, a long-time Israeli activist who survived the concentration camps, has written an article, "The Racist Nature of Zionism and the Zionist State of Israel," which might throw light on the subject, and Sabri Jiryis' volume, *The Arabs of Israel*, details how 15 percent of Israel's population is treated as "non-native" in a land where their families have lived for hundreds of years.

I never stated, and did not mean to imply, that Israel has no right to exist. I feel that a policy of mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO must be the first step in a journey toward peace for the Mideast, which might culminate in the dismantling of exclusivist structures in Israel, making it a land of freedom for Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Arab. Unfortunately, both right and "left" Zionists have consistently blocked attempts at reconciliation, while the PLO has made steady overtures for peace since the mid-'70s. Noam Chomsky's books *The New Cold War* and *The Fateful Triangle* chronicle this and other recent developments.

Toward the day on Mount Zion "when peoples shall come streaming to it, and each man shall dwell under his own vine, under his own fig-tree, undisturbed." (Micah 4:1,4) ■

Standing by Words

By Wendell Berry

North Point Press, 213 pp., \$10.50

By John H. Schaar

Wendell Berry is a poet, an essayist and a novelist. He is also a farmer—a farmer, not an agribusinessman—a teacher, a husband and a patriot. He fits as closely as anyone writing in the U.S. today Emerson's definition of the philosopher as "man thinking."

The six essays that make up *Standing by Words* were written and, with one exception, published between 1974 and '82. They cover a variety of topics—the deterioration of language, the condition of modern poetry, the curse of specialization and the meaning of marriage, community and good work. They are old-fashioned cares, and Berry's way with them is the way of a profoundly conservative temperament—I mean genuine conservatism, and not the perversions that now pass for it.

Berry's outlook lets us see our "conservative" masters in the state, the corporations and the universities for exactly what they are—not conservatives at all, but technological and managerial zealots, as willing as a Robespierre or Babeuf to flatten any feature of the human or natural landscape that impedes progress toward the radiant future of total mechanization and control.

These essays explore connection and relationship: "Reality is in the study of dependences." Their guiding metaphor is the Great Chain of Being. All things

INPRINT

Wendell Berry on the path less travelled by

—a plow as much as a poem, an orchard as much as a marriage—take their meaning and their value from their relationships with other things and their place within the whole. "Nothing exists for its own sake, but for a harmony greater than itself, which includes it."

Up until a couple of centuries ago that vision of the order of things was almost universally held. Berry draws his examples of this from the poets—Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope. But he could as easily have drawn from Aquinas and Anselm, even from Newton and Locke. The natural order was simultaneously a moral order and a divine order as well. Each thing took its value from its place within the whole; all things were judged by the standards of decorum, harmony, propriety and conviviality.

Little of this is left. The Great Chain of Being has been reduced

to the chain of command. The whole has been broken into pieces, separate and isolate. Some "ecological" thinkers are now earnestly trying to refashion something like the older view, but theirs is an uphill battle. The extreme specialization of knowledge is against it. The ecologists themselves, like the rest of us, have been so victimized by bad hierarchies and bad authorities that they fear even to mention obedience and inequality. They want to believe in nothing but freedom, equality and natural cooperation.

Berry sees hierarchy everywhere—in a poem as well as in a food chain. Our world is held together by badly ordered hierarchies, by vast organizations of specialists—economic, military, political—each striving to extend its sphere of control, and with no inherent principles of limit and propriety pervading the whole. The result is the deadly dialectic

charted so precisely by Henry Adams some 80 years ago: increasingly rigid, mechanical, centralized order and power in and over the external world, accompanied by increasing disintegration and powerlessness in the inner lives of individuals and communities. Means consume ends. Morality becomes police.

Deadly diseases?

Two illnesses, each spreading for the past 150 years or more, have reached plague proportions in our day. One is the disintegration of communities; the other is disintegration of persons. Most people recognize that the two feed each other: private loneliness and bewilderment, for example, accompany public confusion and amorality. A host of analysts have attempted to diagnose the causes of the disorders, and huge therapeutic industries—ranging from transcendental meditation to stiffer penalties for criminals—have been built on them. Such enterprises are the real "sunrise industries" of our time, with greater growth potential than anything save possibly the microelectronics and armaments lines.

In the title essay of this collection, Berry examines the ravages worked by these two plagues on language. The disintegration of persons and of communities has also meant an increase in language that is unreliable, dishonest or meretricious; language that is "either meaningless or destructive of meaning"; language that accounts "poorly for what is going on inside the speaker, or outside him, or both." He draws his specimens from many sources—college English textbooks, transcribed conversations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission during the Three Mile Island crisis, modern poetry, writings by university agricultural scientists, technological utopianists of the Buckminster Fuller kind. And a woeful display they make.

Berry offers not merely a parade of horrible instances, but a thoughtful analysis of how the parade began, why it keeps growing, where it is heading and what it might take to slow it down.

In order for a statement to be complete and comprehensive three conditions must be met: the statement must designate its object precisely; its speaker must believe it, stand by it, be accountable for it and willing to act on it; and the community must understand the relation of speaker, word and object. It is harder and harder for statements to meet these conditions, because communities have broken down and persons have disintegrated.

Community experience is the very foundation of language, the source and (largely) unconscious inheritance that are carried (partly, but never wholly) into consciousness. Cut off from this source, language withers, becomes paltry, turns increasingly into a conscious "tool," ready to be put into the service of any expedient purpose.

Characteristically, it will be put into the service of one or the other of two aims.

First, the aims of one or another specialized "community"—bureaucrats, academic specialists, technicians and experts of a thousand kinds—persons focused so intently on their "fields" that their selves are obscure to them. This aim gives us the jargons of objectivity and detachment, pure dedication to subject matter, language divorced from action

Wendell Berry's cares are old-fashioned, conservative in the true sense of the word.

and commitment, words nobody is meant to "stand by." Think of Adolf Eichmann.

The second is language that serves the aims of isolated, detached selves—persons so engrossed in their own feelings, so absorbed in their own raptures and distresses that they are blinded to where they are and who is there with them, and what is being done in the world. Let Shelley the poet, at least in his more Promethean moments, stand for the type.

Bad objectivity and bad subjectivity; bad submission and bad freedom; bad specialization and bad generalization. Language and life detached from their source in communal experience.

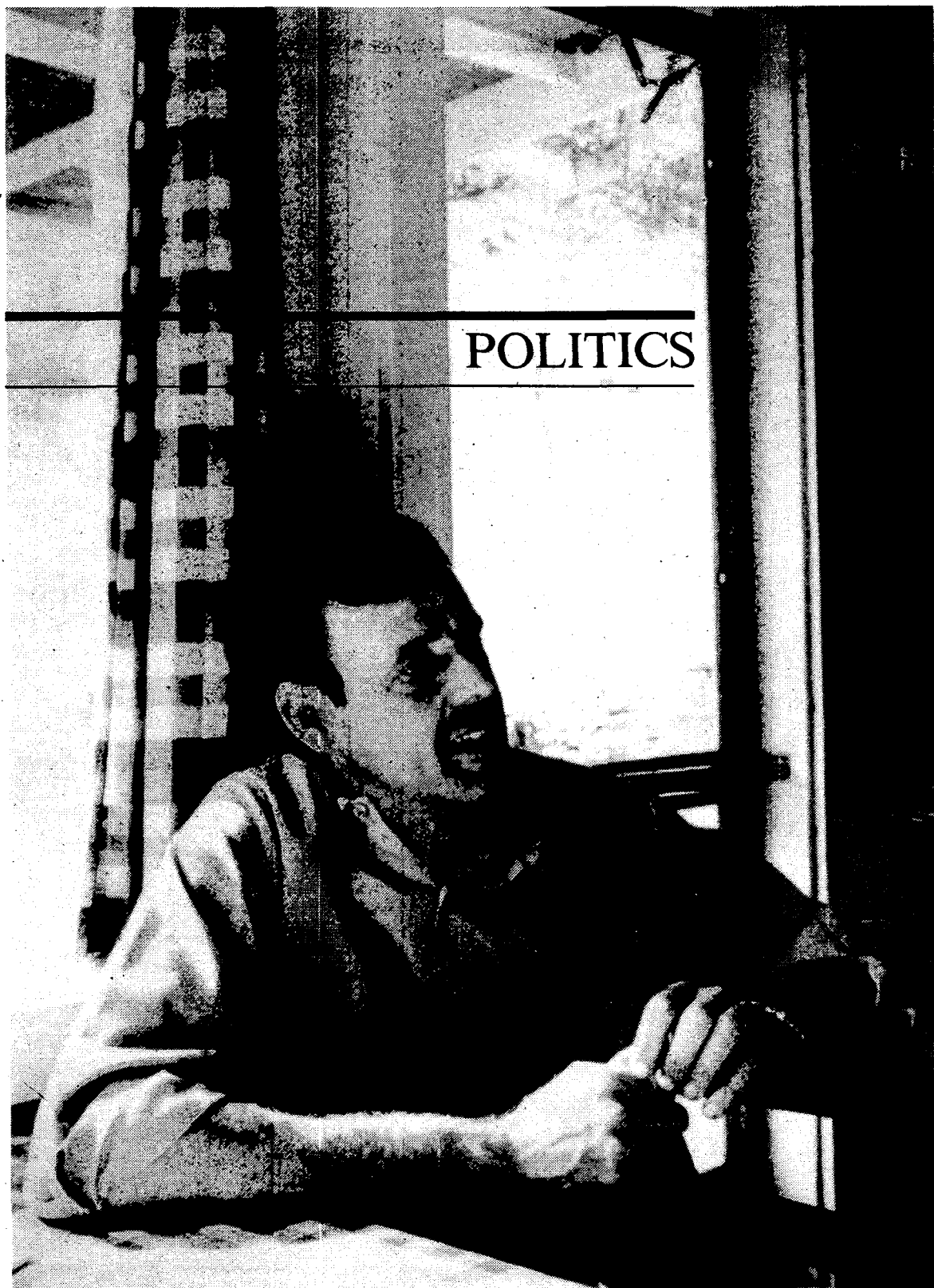
We might, as good "realists," resign ourselves to this degradation of life and language. Or we might, as good specialists, continue to cultivate our little field, taking no care or responsibility for the whole. Both of those paths require much discipline. But both are also paths of futility and despair.

There is another path, the path Wendell Berry points to when he reminds us that "if one wishes to promote the life of language, one must promote the life of the community." That path too requires discipline—indeed, a discipline far more arduous, long and intellectually demanding than any discipline now current in mainstream academic and political life—but at least it has the virtues of faithfulness and hopefulness.

Berry, in this and others of his books (including *The Unsettling of America, Recollected Essays: 1965-1980* and *The Gift of Good Land*) has set a good many markers along this path. He is a reliable guide. I am sure he wants no followers, in the ordinary sense of that term, but I am equally sure that he more merits followers than any of the men on the national scene who are clamoring for them—any of the many in politics and the corporations who offer freedom, security and prosperity, all at little cost, if you will only follow their paths. Their paths are quite familiar ones. Their version of progress is "more of the same, only more so": more bad work for more workers; more bureaucrats to regulate more activities; more technical training in the schools and universities; a firmer "social contract" among the huge entrenched interests of government, capital and labor; more power over nature and human beings; more police and armaments to keep the recalcitrant in line.

At the top levels of wealth and power in this country there are simply no disagreements about these things, no serious politics at all, no Democratic alternative to Republican recklessness. One must look elsewhere for serious politics and serious political thinking. One must look at the thousands of people and small groups who have seen through the destructiveness of the logic of bigness, centralization and technology run amuck and who are searching for new ways to act and work, ways that stress place, community and commitment, decentralization and local control, conservation, variety and balance. These are the genuinely radical and creative paths for us today, and Wendell Berry is helping us build them.

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The making of the electrical workers union

The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse
By Ronald W. Schatz
University of Illinois Press,
279 pp., \$22.95

By Michael Kazin

This book should be required reading for union organizers who are trying to crack paternalistic high-technology firms. It explains how, during the '30s, electrical workers forced what were then the most advanced corporations in the world to recognize and bargain with their Communist-led union. Ronald Schatz's sophisticated history tells who created the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), illuminates the significance of their victory and documents how the union became a major casualty of the McCarthy era.

What distinguishes this crisply written study from most of the labor histories that have proliferated over the last decade is that Schatz sees the electrical industry as a whole. He takes the thinking and policies of management as seriously as the demands and politics of the workers. His book is Marxist history at its best—a study of class conflict that analyzes major classes and shows how each shaped the other during the period when American capitalism rose to unchallenged world supremacy.

According to Schatz, the men who built General Electric and Westinghouse into industrial giants fueled by state-of-the-art engineering were also leading advocates of "corporatism"—the belief that both government and industry should be ruled by a partnership of interest groups—workers and consumers as well as businessmen and civil servants. This ideology emerged after World War I, especially among those state and business executives who sought a way to permanently heal the social ruptures that had accompanied the carnage in the trenches and then led to revolutions and near-revolutions throughout Europe. As heads of government production agencies during both world wars, electrical manufacturers were able to practice their preachings. These men who designed and sold everything from giant turbines to counter-top toasters ap-knew better than any other group of businessmen the importance of coordinated production and satisfied consumers.

Applied to the workplace, this world-view resulted in a remarkably enlightened paternalism. In the '20s, GE executives Gerard Swope and Owen D. Young and their counterparts at Westinghouse turned their plants into advertisements for capitalism. In towns like Schenectady and East Pittsburgh, they paid the highest wages available to factory workers. They established educational programs as extensive as those of a major university. In order to convince workers to stay with the company, they even considered seniority when deciding an em-

ployee's status. Rather than firing union activists, managers promoted them.

When the Depression came, Swope (whose Jewish background made him an oddity among industrial moguls) drafted a far-reaching plan for cooperative trade associations and unemployment insurance that became the basis of Franklin Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration. For his part, Young dreamed in public of a time when workers and employers would co-exist in such harmony that "we shall have no hired men."

Faced with benevolent bosses, the women and men who organized a union at GE and West-

inghouse had to be stirred by more than the promise of higher wages. Schatz, in one of his most fascinating chapters, draws a portrait of 35 "union pioneers" who forged the UE. Downtrodden immigrant laborers were noticeably absent from the group. The male "pioneers" were predominantly skilled workers of Northern European ancestry, marked both by experience and high pay as part of a blue-collar

largely from oral interviews, suggests a truth that often gets neglected in romanticized working-class histories that feature militant proletarians with fists raised high. Labor organizing is a task demanding emotional dexterity and a refusal to accept failure—qualities a life of unskilled drudgery does not normally engender. Only rare individuals have the exuberant self-confidence required. But Schatz's findings should not be surprising. In every historical period, successful organizers have usually come from the ranks of the politically and personally unconventional. A well-paid, skilled position and a class-conscious heritage separate one from the rank and file, but they also permit a view above the daily grind, without which no social movement is possible.

This collective profile, drawn

meant the substitution of law for the arbitrary treatment of the corporation's middle men. "This was the greatest accomplishment of the union movement of the '30s and '40s," he writes, "the achievement which justifies its claim to stand beside abolitionism, civil rights and women's rights as one of the great movements for freedom and dignity in American history."

Yet, by its nature, seniority divided workers at the same time as it freed them from submissiveness. Due to the sexual division of labor, most women were locked into unskilled jobs, no matter how long they had served the company. Since few blacks had worked in the electrical industry before World War II, they faced long stretches at the bottom of the personnel ladder. However, as Schatz shows, most UE members cherished the strict application of the seniority principle as synonymous with unionism itself. In 1949, when Communist officials called for all blacks to be awarded two to five years of "super seniority," party members who worked for the UE sim-

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ism in the electrical industry survived at all.

The one blind-spot in this otherwise clear-sighted study is Schatz's treatment of the Communist Party (CP). He dutifully identifies the political loyalties of major and minor individuals throughout the story but seldom includes the CP as an organizational actor in the drama. When narrating the postwar union "crack-up," for example, he gives a fascinating account of how red-baiting Catholics influenced the struggle between the UE and the IUE at two western Pennsylvania factories but is silent on the Party's role. Schatz rightly sympathizes with left workers who lost their jobs and community standing during the American Inquisition. But he should have analyzed how their Party may have contributed to the debacle that beset the UE, which, in Schatz's words, "was the largest Communist-led institution of any kind in the U.S."

This omission, while troubling, does not greatly tarnish the book's value. Other historians of CP-dominated unions—Bert



In 1925, GE's Bloomfield, N.J., bowling team (above); workers masquerade as capitalists at a 1942 demonstration (below).



This book is different from other labor histories: Schatz sees the electrical industry as a whole.

elite. Most had a background in other unions, Communist organizations, or both. Among the early leaders of the UE were men who had spurned middle-class careers: Julius Emspak, the union's first secretary-treasurer,

ply ignored them. They realized that affirmative action would be anathema to fellow workers.

Schatz is more concerned with understanding the limits to labor's strength in the New Deal era than in celebrating its unquestioned advances. Careful research allows him to depict the fragile social fabric of a complex industry in which refrigerator assemblers had little in common with skilled electricians and devout Catholics bitterly mistrusted secular leftists. In the early '50s, after the CIO had expelled the Communist-led UE, Westinghouse and GE workers fought a fratricidal war to decide whether their old union or the new International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) would represent them. Schatz's sober account of this conflict and the skill with which management exploited it leaves one marvelling that union-

Cochran, Cletus Daniel, Charles Larrowe and Joshua Freeman—have demonstrated that Party members strived, above all, to be pragmatic and responsible organizers and officials. Their larger political agenda generally consisted of proposing resolutions at union meetings about the Scottsboro Boys, Spain and the Second Front.

Moreover, with the current boom in studies on the CP and its legacy, Schatz gives us something of broader significance: a portrayal of unionization in one of America's major industries that captures the world both managers and workers have made and draws useful lessons for today's tormented labor movement. ■ Michael Kazin teaches U.S. history at Stanford University and is writing a book about San Francisco labor and politics in the early 20th century.



Chris Callas

DANCE

Series makes few waves

By Lynn Garafola

Whither dance? This topic of endless speculation in which New York ballet circles since George Balanchine died last spring can be raised as well about other forms of contemporary dance. The Brooklyn Academy of Music's (BAM) recent "Next Wave" festival suggests that the postmodernist aesthetic that reigned over American dance in the '70s has reached an artistic crossroads.

Despite the intimation of its title, not much in the "Next Wave" series was new. Thanks to an impressive list of corporate and government sponsors, BAM came up with a program that cast familiar artists in unfamiliar collaborations that often bore the mark of enterprise rather than art.

The choreographic headliners of this "Next Wave" series—Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs and David Gordon—belong to the founding generation of dance postmodernists. Recipients of prestigious awards, lions of New York's "downtown" and the European festival circuit, these graduates of the '60s avant-garde have yet, however, to enter the mainstream of American dance. Thus, along with showcasing the theatrical trend of their recent work, the festival—some of which will tour the U.S.—publicized the current bid by these choreographers to reach a broader spectrum of the American au-

dience.

Postmodernism was born outside the traditional theater, in alternative spaces like church halls, galleries, parks, lofts and gymnasiums. It eschewed decorative effects and adopted sneakers and sweatpants as its performing uniform. Choreography was equally anti-theatrical: ordinary movement, grid-like patterns, repetitions that renounced virtuosity.

Since the '70s, the spare, stripped-down postmodernism has changed. Non-dancers are a thing of the past; the professionals are now sleeker, technically stronger, often smartly groomed. The choreography, too, is elegant and stylized—a combination of multi-media collaborations that began in the late '70s has added a spectacular dimension to many works.

Spectacle & choreography.

This was pretty much the case of *Set and Reset* and *Available Light*, two highly touted premieres of the BAM season, which combined high-tech chic and avant-garde theatrics. In each, Trisha Brown and Lucinda Childs used spectacle as a means of adapting the scale of their choreography to the cavernous space of the opera house. But instead of enlarging the dance, the visual brilliance of these works had the opposite effect. As appendages to the choreography rather than an integral part of it, the spectacular embellishments diminished rather than heightened the kinetic impact of the

dance.

Take the giant cube designed by Robert Rauschenberg for *Set and Reset*, a dazzling construction that slowly rose, to the oohs and aahs of the packed house, until it hovered several feet above the floor. Here it remained throughout the performance, while the dancers—dwarfed by the enormity of the structure and the continuous flicker of video images on its sides—went through their paces underneath.

Or consider architect Frank O. Gehry's baroque fantasy for Lucinda Childs' *Available Light*, a two-level scaffold that suggested an unfinished stadium. Dancers made an occasional entrance through its doorways and on its oversized upper platform, one or two figures mirrored the choreography of the group below. Nothing in the design spoke to the precision-tool abstraction, sparseness and intensity of Child's choreography.

Big names may pull in an audience, but they don't necessarily add up to an artistically unified production. In the teaming of Brown and Rauschenberg with Laurie Anderson, whose high voltage score poorly matched the laid-back style of the choreographer, a commercial intent was unmistakable—a calculated appeal to the loft-dwelling gentry that turned out in force for the event.

Even in the token "new wave" group of the BAM series, the vis-

Marcia Trees and Haywood McGriff Jr. in WIND DEVIL, choreographed by Nina Wiener.

ual trappings took on a life of their own, advertising themselves as artistic commodities. Molissa Fenley and Dancers appeared on stage in unisex designs from Rei Kawakubo's spring/summer fashion collection, while the "visual element" of *Hemispheres*, Fenley's much-heralded premiere, was a packet of prints by jet-setting artist Francesco Clemente distributed to the audience. The hard-edged rhythms of Anthony Davis' heavily amplified score, on the other hand, matched the kinetic barrage of Fenley's choreography—a punk paean to youth and the brick-and-tar city streets.

Of the remaining events in the BAM "Next Wave" line-up, only Nina Wiener and Dancers belong to the American dance-scape. Rina Schenfeld, a solo artist who has studied in the U.S., works mostly in Israel. Her imaginative use of objects—sticks, ropes, mirrors, swatches of fabric—reflected an expressionist current dating back to the '20s. Carolyn Carlson, an American who spent much of the '70s with the experimental group of the Paris Opera, also looked to the past in an ambitious, full-evening work performed by the company of Venice's La Fenice Theatre.

More than any other work in the series, Carlson's *Underwood* achieved the kind of theatrical synthesis distinctly lacking in BAM's much-vaunted collaborations. From the prairie-scape backdrop and Edward Hopper-style dresses to the suggestions of Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* in the choreography, the work evoked a feeling of '30s Americana. Such harmony, one feels, is not a matter of chance. With full public support and the backing of one of Italy's most venerable theaters, Carlson does not have to play to the purveyors of gentrified chic.

In many ways, Nina Wiener's *Wind Devil* was the surprise treat of the festival, an intriguing blend of lyricism and virtuoso aerobics, plotless patterning and emotional suggestiveness. Judy Pfaff's set—a bright, fantasy romper room—complemented both the game-like structures of

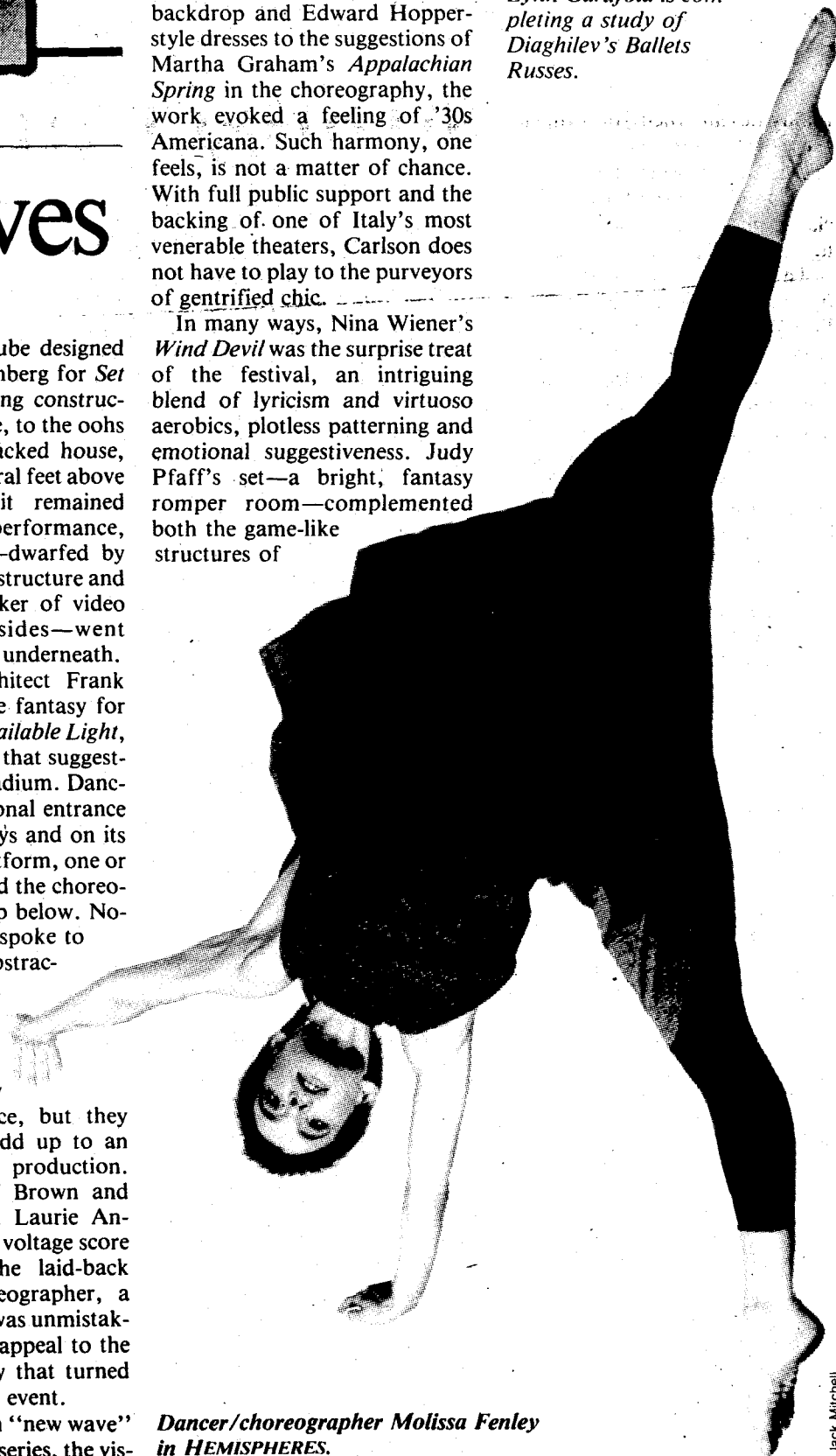
the choreography and Wiener's evocation of childhood conflicts and growing pains. But as in most of BAM's collaborations, it erred on the side of prodigality.

Wiener's dancers do not only dance. They perform, and part of the pleasure in watching this talented and varied group (the only company in the series with a black performer) comes from the revelation of each dancer's physical and artistic uniqueness. Here, too, lies a major difference with BAM's postmodernist headliners, whose dancers rarely break free of a choreographic style that emphasizes sameness at the expense of individuality.

Wiener is not alone in her humanistic concerns and more direct forms of communication. In such pieces as Anne Bogart's *History: An American Dream* and Yoshiko Chuma's *Pikka Don* and *I Left Her Behind for You*, to cite three works seen this autumn in New York, postmodernist devices were imaginatively recycled to create strong antiwar and antinuclear statements.

BAM ignored this trend, but that should come as no surprise. For in its choice of artists and emphasis on collaborative razzmatazz, BAM revealed a bias as time-bound as postmodernism itself: a view of dance as a "content-less" medium whose forms convey nothing except aural and visual sensuousness and the veneer of contemporary fashion. In its next "Next Wave" festival, BAM should take a closer look at the choreographic talents making waves outside the postmodern mainstream.

Lynn Garafola is completing a study of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.



Jack Mitchell

Dancer/choreographer Molissa Fenley in HEMISPHERES.

By Pat Aufderheide

Two recent, excellently crafted independent films on Central American themes, *El Norte* and *When the Mountains Tremble*, challenge our expectations of the kind of entertainment that makes an explicit link to social issues.

In *El Norte*, Gregory Nava (*The Confessions of Aman*) and Anna Thomas (*The Haunting of M*; and also author of *The Vegetarian Epicure* cookbooks) make an unusual fiction saga about illegal immigration. Done by independent filmmakers with a record of experimentation, and executed without the big-bucks constraints of commercial production, it's a surprisingly traditional and modestly heart-tugging movie. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting picked it up for "American Playhouse" series (choosing to showcase it first in theaters), which is not surprising. It's a familiar enough drama of conscience—a made-for-PBS version of the made-for-TV movie. Its distinction is that it's done well, and it's about "them"—people of another culture.

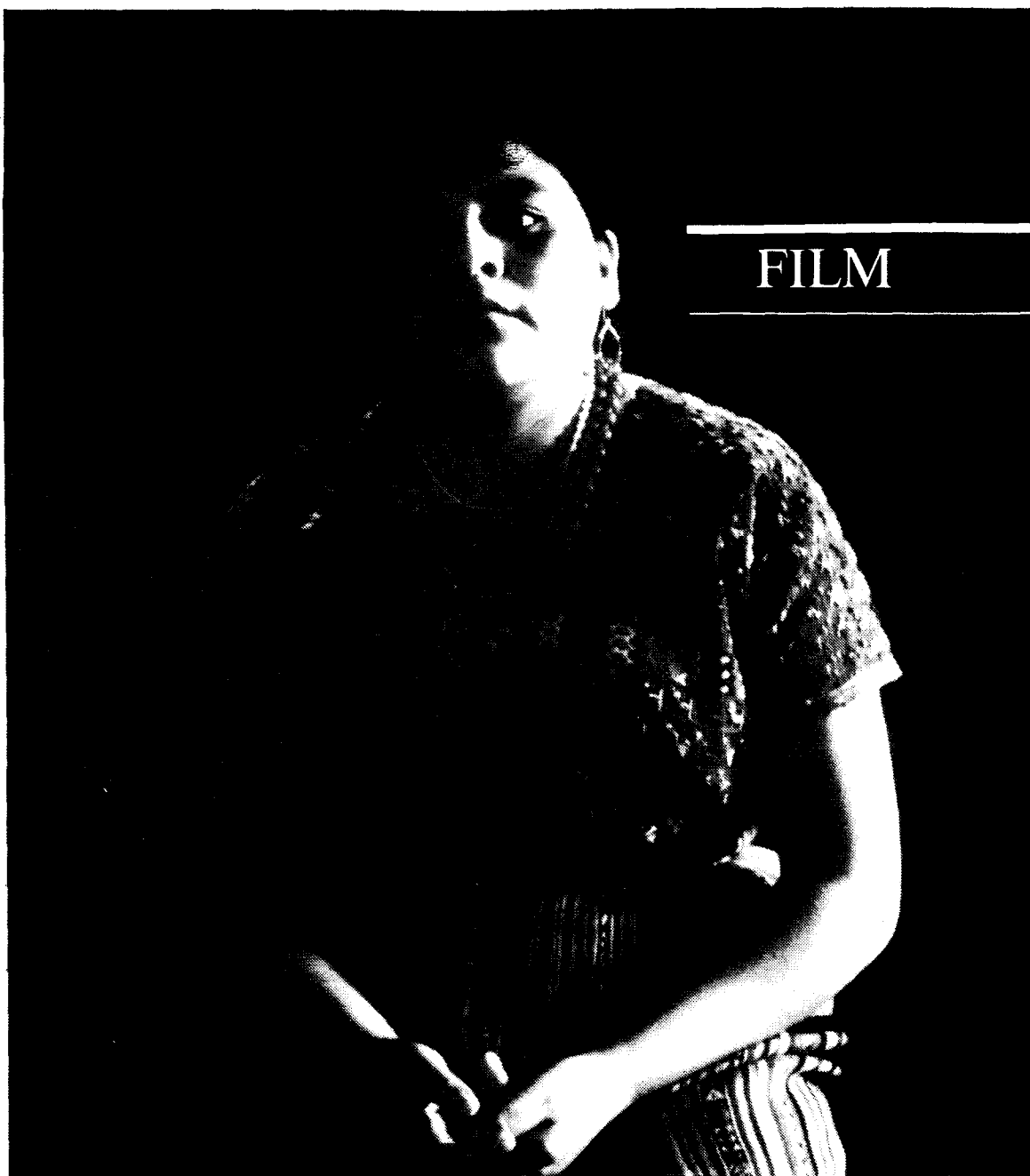
In an engrossing 140 minutes, *El Norte* traces the sojourn of siblings Enrique and Rosa (Mexican stage actors David Villalpando and Zaide Silvia Gutierrez)—Guatemalan Indians who must flee their highlands village when the military starts liquidating the family. (Their father has been discovered taking part in a movement to defend Indian land.) Their dangerous escape takes them through one foreign land—Mexico, where they must disguise their Indian accents and where they encounter horrific urban slums—and into another, southern California. Bolstered by their family ties and their youthful energy, they live in neon-lit squalor and get service work in luxurious homes and restaurants of middle-class whites. Their quest for refuge becomes permanent exile.

This journey was taken before by an independent filmmaker, Bob Young, in *Alambrista!*, and *El Norte* deliberately shares some of that film's strengths. In both, the central focus is on the migrants, not like in *The Border*, where the Americans dominate the story. And we see what happens through their eyes. (It looks like the filmmakers also studied some moments in the European film about migrant labor, *Bread and Chocolate*.)

Much has been made of the "magical realist" quality of Nava's cinematographic style. However, except for a few references to true magical realists such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez—for instance, a butterfly-ridden room—there is less magical realism here than graceful, gently paced photography at a subjective angle. *El Norte* never turns Guatemala into picture-postcard exotica; but it stays within the limits of the recognizably tasteful. The movie does draw us into the touch and feel and smell of someone else's world—and thus it can show us what it means for Enrique and Rosa to leave it. The result is not only to put us in someone else's shoes, but to show us the U.S. as a foreign country, complete with baffling new languages, gadgets and documents.

"Illegal immigrants."

The plot is carefully designed to focus our attention on the feelings of the two principals as they encounter the many difficulties along their epic journey, while also serving as a kind of catalogue of migrants' problems—



In Guatemala, truth is stranger than fiction

corrupt "coyotes," the green card hurdle, conflicts with Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. By the film's end, names and faces have been given to a formerly bloodless category, "illegal immigrant."

El Norte thus takes the North American viewer a long way past the Kissinger Commission's idea of what's going on in Central America. But it takes us down a familiar road, the one followed by every made-for-TV movie, where social conflict is reduced to personal drama. True, it does not travel as far along that road as they do at the networks, where personal crisis is resolved inexorably with a therapeutic solution and a strong dose of love. But rather than a strength, this becomes a weakness for the film.

If EL NORTE's characters endured the real life portrayed in WHEN THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLE, it would be dismissed as melodrama.

When Enrique and Rosa can find no happy-ever-after, there is no real ending for the movie, which finishes as if someone had hit the "pause" button on the video recorder.

Making individual sagas exemplify social crisis has other drawbacks. Since the people are not characters in society so much as social types and exemplars of programs, the plot can easily fall victim to the ledger-list effect. Enrique and Rosa, in their Pilgrim's Progress-like journey northward, run the gamut of migrants' miseries. It is as if comprehensiveness had been taken for authenticity. Also the close-up attention to the characters leaves no room for structural questions—"the big picture." Secondary characters delivering homilies on the role of cheap labor in the California economy must suffice for analysis.

Finally, the approach makes it easy for Enrique and Rosa to become recognizable emotional characters. Their reactions to both trauma and triumph are stereotypical enough to evoke that sigh-of-relief reaction: "See? They're people just like you and me."

But we aren't Guatemalan Indian illegal immigrants who have been put through an emotional and physical meat grinder. We don't in fact know how we would react, but years of steady feeding on made-for-TV's emotional pabulum should at least make us suspicious that this Enrique and Rosa look so unthreateningly familiar in their personalities and reactions.

These, however, are thoughts on the movie that arise on reflection, after the first wave of sentiment has passed. *El Norte* deserves credit for being an independent American film about other people made with sensitivity. With unaffected charm, it holds the attention of viewers who may never have seen a movie about Latin Americans that has Latin Americans as protagonists, played by Latin Americans, speaking Latin American languages.

Incomprehensible. But watching the feature-length documentary *When the Mountains Tremble* shows you that truth is stranger than fiction. If Enrique and Rosa endured the real life of this film's central speaker, Rigoberta Menchu, we would dismiss the film as overwrought melodrama. But not only is it all true, filmmakers Pam Yates and Tom Sigel interest us in it and even, finally, help us comprehend the incomprehensible.

Veterans of network news teamwork in Central America, Sigel and Yates have long been concerned with the tone and perspective of the information we get. After years of making contacts and watching conflict build in the Guatemalan highlands, they made this movie. It's a film with an argument, tracing the evolution of the current government's war against the Indians back to the 1954 overthrow of Jacob Arbenz's elected government and the installation of a U.S.-backed military regime. It asserts unequivocally that Guatemala's conflicts have Guatemalan—not Russian or Cuban—roots. But it does all

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WHEN THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLE's Rigoberta Menchu

this without lecturing, indeed without a narrator. The many ways in which the filmmakers let the story unfold is powerful evidence that documentary filmmaking is much more than "going there and getting it on film."

These filmmakers take the form far beyond the familiar show-and-tell style. They use the power of film to reveal, to evoke and to shock. What might easily have become picturesque color material—the breathtaking visual poems that make up the highlands landscape, for example—are used to express nostalgia, attachment, a sense of loss. What might have been just a visual accompaniment to an argument instead takes center stage—we learn, for instance, that Guatemalan elections are controlled by the army simply by watching peasants being watched by armed soldiers as they vote. And instead of using stills and narration to summarize history, the filmmakers in one controversial section recreate a historical incident, making the footage look like newsreel film of the day.

The film is also well-stocked with interviews that never take on a "talking-head" quality. Officials, foot soldiers, peasants and priests tell us as much non-verbally about who they are as they do with their often-startled replies to the no-nonsense questioning. Particularly interesting was the filmmakers' choice to put the Indian speaker Rigoberta Menchu smack in center stage, in front of a simple backdrop, and in not-quite close-up. We become riveted to not only her words but to her slightest facial expressions and gestures. As she recounts the cruelties of her childhood on a plantation and the vicious persecution of her family today—leaving her the survivor in a family of martyrs—her face remains stolid, contained, her voice remains firm but quiet. This, unlike *El Norte's* Rosa, is a woman who is not "just like you and me." Her life has shaped her otherwise.

It may be surprising that, in a film about lives filled with so much brutality and violence, the viewer confronts so little of it. Most of the Guatemalans we meet are neither thugs nor pitiable victims, although they must confront horror every day. The filmmakers spare us this violence not to slight its existence, but to heighten our shock at realizing it. For instance, even though military massacres in Indian villages have become all too frequent, only once do we visit such a village. We are prepared for it by a survey of children's drawings of violence, which makes us realize the larger social tragedy around the death of any one person. Once at the village, we know who died there, who killed them, and why.

If *El Norte* opens the door to understanding the people behind the headlines and statistics, it is *When the Mountains Tremble* that makes us the invited guest in someone else's story. Unavoidably, that story, however alien at the outset, comes back to us. With each new mad foreign policy move from this administration, we need to understand it better. ■

Pat Aufderheide 1984
For more information on ordering for theatrical and nontheatrical use, write *El Norte*, Cinecom, 7 W. 36th St., NY, NY 10018; *When the Mountains Tremble*, Skylight Pictures, 330 W. 42nd St., NY, NY 10036.

IAF

Continued from page 13

was made a member of both the council and a search committee.

In the person of Bill Doherty, new-right ideologues have apparently found the bridge to important old-guard and big-bucks foreign aid interests. Doherty's interests in cutting his organization in on what IAF has are not the only ones. There is, of course, the longstanding interest of AID, now represented on the board by McPherson. (McPherson is also too busy to return press calls about the IAF.) And there are other private organizations, too, such as the Pan-American Development Foundation, which has big-business links. Bill Middendorf is on their board of trustees.

But greed isn't the worst of this story. What happened at the IAF fits in all too well with several other foreign policy trends. Together they suggest that for Reagan the southern hemisphere is nothing more than a sacrifice area in the East-West holy war, and that the most important thing is not expertise, or good sense, but true belief.

Consider Reagan's ambassadorial appointments. In Latin America they have been both ideological and inflammatory. For instance, he tried to appoint hardliner Lewis Tambs, serving on the National Security Council, to Panama. The only problem was Tambs had been one of the loudest opponents of the Panama Canal Treaty and in the 1978 report had warned of "Soviet-Cuban axis" efforts of subversion. The Panamanians simply refused to take him, so Tambs was served up to the Colombians, who accepted him with reluctance.

Consider Reagan's interpretation of the word "Hispanic" as being "Cuban-American," especially the most well-heeled part of the anti-Castro commun-

ity. He made Jose Manuel Casanova, a Cuban-American Florida stockbroker and banker, the U.S. governor of the Inter-American Development Bank. Casanova's beliefs were recently on display by his prominence on a foreign policy panel sponsored by the Unification Church.

Consider the Latin American expertise the administration has close at hand. Until two weeks ago, the reigning expert at the National Security Council was Constantine Menges, who spent his time before joining this administration working at the Hudson Institute, a right-wing think tank. (He just moved even closer to the president, becoming a special assistant for national security affairs.) At least three Democratic senators—Paul Tsongas, Claiborne Pell and Christopher Dodd—don't think much of his expertise. After a 1981 briefing he gave them while he was still working for the CIA, they protested that it "evidenced a rhetorical tone and selective use of information."

He is, however, consistent. That same tone was evident a few weeks ago when he spoke to a group of farm wives visiting Washington, telling them the domino theory, Latin-American style. He envisioned "27 million people in Central America living under Marxist-Leninist hegemony" should El Salvador "fall."

And think of who Reagan listens to on Latin America in the State Department. Not George Schultz, who is seen to get uneasy when asked about the area, but Langhorne Motley, whose best solution for El Salvador in the last few weeks was: "What it's going to take is continued support in the form of military assistance."

Finally, look at the actions: the Grenada invasion, overt support for the counterrevolutionaries or *contras* in Nicaragua, hefty military aid for El Salvador. In the realm of persuasion, there's the proposal for the National Endowment for Democracy (AIFLD is favored as a likely fundee). Reagan sees the Endowment as combatting Communist

"missionaries" by "doing a little selling itself of the principles of democracy."

Long-time supporters of the IAF foresee the demise of an organization that uniquely sustained good relations with Latin American countries. They point to the fact that it is the only aid agency that has been allowed to enter Mexico in a decade, and that the Foundation has administered a grant to a small business in Nicaragua that was issued first during the Somoza era into the Sandinista regime.

But they see more ominous consequences than the loss of that agency. As Peter Jones put it before Congress, "After Grenada and Central America both, for anybody in this administration or in this town now to undermine the IAF is just sending one more signal that the only dimension that they are able to see is East-West."

George Cabot Lodge, the Harvard economics professor who served for seven years on the IAF board and has, since Bell's resignation, resigned from the advisory council in protest, says, "The Reagan appointees seem to think that change is the work of our enemies. They tend to think they, like King Canute, can stop progress. Nothing could make Moscow and Havana happier than for us to attribute all change in Latin America to them. If we go on this way, we could have Grenadas all over Latin America."

Domestically, the trend is just as ominous. The IAF is only one of the non-partisan agencies turned into political tools for the short run—and self-destruction in the long run. There was the Legal Services Corporation, where the board was packed with ideologues and Reagan loyalists. That was followed by free-wheeling play with rules that circumvented Congress while sabotaging the Corporation's mandate. There was the presently-contested recess appointment to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, one of Reagan's least favorite media outlets. And there were the recent appointments at the Civil Rights Commission, whose strides toward mitigating the consequences of racism may now be history.

This is not government as usual, or even hardball party politics. This is a new game. What baffles some in government is how Reagan even intends to play politics like this. Explains Bill Danvers, a Garcia aide, "Like the Civil Rights Commission, this agency had remained above the political fray. So why all of a sudden does a president who is clamoring for bipartisan support appoint someone who turns it around?"

"You lose credibility. This administration treats poor people and Third World people in a patronizing way. They apparently think they can maintain vigilance over traditional American values this way. They can't."

Calling the takeover "an exercise in raw power," Dante Fascell convened investigative hearings as one of the first items of the season's business in Congress. Facing the board triumvirate that engineered the coup—Middendorf, Motley and McPherson—Democratic mem-

bers of Congress grilled them about their actions. It was a therapeutic session for embattled liberals, who exhibited a combination of frustration and indignation with phrases like "hatchet job" and "destruction." Gary Studds from Massachusetts wanted to know why the board majority hadn't given the obligatory 10-day notice of a change in the board's agenda when Bell was ousted. He got a murmured technical reply. "In microcosm," he concluded, "as much in sorrow as in anger" for the crippling of an agency that worked, "this is a horrendously good example of the triumph of the ideologues."

The committee members groped in vain for some sign of cooperation from the board. California's Mel Levine asked point blank if they would require unanimous board approval of the new president, as was the precedent. Middendorf: "Maybe." McPherson: "That may not be possible." Motley: "You wouldn't want that requirement in your own committee." Levine replied sharply that no one expected unanimity in a partisan body, but that he had thought the IAF was not political.

Rep. Garcia didn't even expect contrition from the big three. "Don't be afraid to talk politics," he told them. "As I understand you, in the future when we want to help Central America, first we call up the Heritage Foundation, and then Pinochet, and then Gen. Stroessner, and then Alvarez. Well, I think we should check with the mothers of the disappeared!"

"You have the votes; you can do whatever you want," he went on, urging them to phone up Stroessner. "But I don't believe that's the way to run an agency... and that's not what this country is all about."

Well, it is now. Or so it seems. Congress is not taking the takeover easily, but no solutions seem in sight. Another hearing is slated on the IAF, however. There are also rumblings of discontent in the Senate, where an internal memo by Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee was leaked to Jack Anderson. The memo points with concern to Victor Blanco, calling him "an unguided missile" whose actions will cause "unnecessary embarrassment." But this administration is not easily embarrassed. Further, the Kissinger Report points aid in precisely the direction that Motley and crew are eager to go.

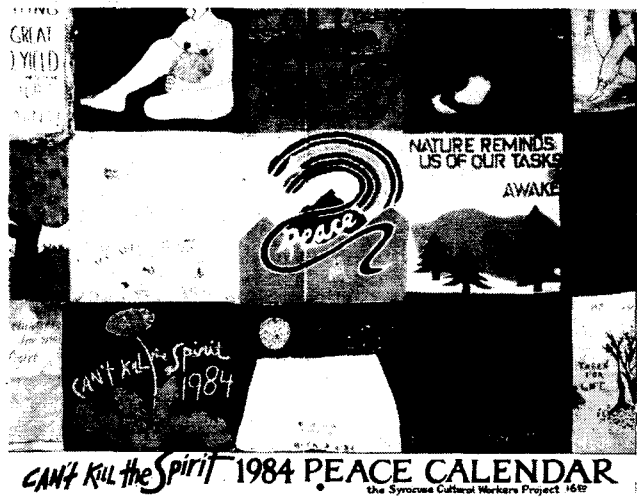
It isn't just Mexican seamstresses who suffer when the IAF goes. There's a whiff of McCarthyism about this takeover. For some small outfit in Peru named Mariategui, the people who worked to fulfill a congressional mandate have been smeared as abettors of Communism, either enemies or dupes.

Something is lost in our way of life, too. An IAF supporter, an ex-Peace Corps volunteer and now an aid consultant, put it this way: "When the IAF thing blew up, so did the hope of a lot of people like us. It was an enclave of decency."

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A version of this article first appeared in the *Village Voice*.

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February 11

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February 23

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Aloni

Continued from page 24

women's bodies were all but nationalized, she says.

Her struggle for more enlightened family planning and reproductive rights legislation has attracted Aloni the wrath of ultra-rightist Rabbi Meir Kahane. "One day, Kahane and his followers staged a demonstration near my home during which they called me a murderer and shouted that the current birth rate would not produce enough soldiers for the 1990s. However, I live in a village where many people immigrated from Nazi Germany. When Kahane arrived, the local people came out with their farm-tools shouting, 'We've had enough of fascism,' and they did not allow Kahane to reach my house."

Mythical women.

These battles for liberalized legislation occur against a mythological background of the "liberated" Israeli woman. Abroad, the Israeli woman's image is one of independence and equality, attained through generations of pioneering and

fighting wars. Aloni says the myth of independence is exactly that—a myth.

"In various societies which have experienced revolutionary changes—Russia, China, Mexico—women actively participate and, for a short time, they are given equal rights and a better status. The same process occurred in Israel during the pioneering period and, since it was not so long ago, that impression remains in people's minds.

"Our reliance on the military has inevitably led to a 'macho' society where women are encouraged to stay home to welcome their husbands and sons when they return from army duty. Although most women are drafted into the military, they are usually given minor supportive roles. During the Yom Kippur War, the whole country was outraged because two or three girls were wounded. Why was this so catastrophic? During the war in Lebanon, no woman was allowed to go there."

Golda Meir's reign contributed significantly toward promoting the image of women's equality in Israeli society. "Once you have a female prime minister, people think you have raised the overall status of women."

For 35 years, Israeli women's activities have been dominated by two large, conservative organizations: the Histadrut

trade union movement's Na'Amat and the more middle-class Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO). This situation, however, may be changing.

"Younger women of the third generation of Israelis are starting to revolt despite the power of the two older generations. They feel strongly about their rights. Various women's liberation groups have been organized in different locations around the country. Although small, they are strong and active."

Centers for battered women and rape victims have been established without any governmental support. "I led a Knesset committee to change police procedures for dealing with crimes involving rape. I also made much use of the media to change public opinion. Six years ago, people would have said that women were to blame. That attitude has now changed."

Peace Now.

The expansionist policies pursued by Begin and Yitzhak Shamir have impelled Aloni to expand the parameters of her own political battlefield. She recently lent her name to a declaration, signed by 30 Israeli Knesset members and numerous public figures, calling for an end to settlements in the West Bank. As an active supporter of the Peace Now movement,

she travels abroad to promote its cause to foreign audiences.

Aloni's party advocates free elections in the occupied territories, to be followed by peace negotiations with the Palestinians and Jordan. As the peace process evolves, Israel could then return to her "true size," approximating the old borders of 1967. "We certainly are strong enough to withdraw from conquered lands in order to build a genuine peace."

To assist those Israelis who are fighting their country's increasing ultra-chauvinism, Aloni constantly urges Jews abroad to be bold enough to publicly criticize the Israeli government. "They must stop their automatic support for every Israeli policy and not be deterred that they will be labelled 'traitors' for doing so. Support for the present government is, after all, support for only one side in Israel's internal struggle."

While Aloni sees progress in specific areas, she is less than optimistic about what long-term changes her work will bring. "Step by step," she says, "we make some gains. My feeling, however, is that I am running up an escalator that is going down. So, although I believe I have some achievements to my credit, the overall process is going backward."

Barry Cohen is foreign editor of the *New Statesman* in London.

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PUBLICATIONS

THE NEOCONSERVATIVE OFFENSIVE: The U.S. Churches and the Ideological Struggle for Latin America, by Ana Maria Ezcurra, Ph.D., is now available in English. To order send \$4.95 plus \$.75 postage to New York CIRCUS Publications, Inc., Box 37, New York, NY 10108.

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A feminist pioneer SHULAMIT ALONI

discusses Israel's civil rights frontier.

Photograph: JUDAH PASSOW



BY BARRY COHEN

In Israeli political life, where governments rise and fall on their ability to strike a coalition agreement with the religious parties, few politicians dare to publicly challenge religious coercion in public policy. Swimming against the political mainstream, Shulamit Aloni has carved out a singular reputation as Israel's outstanding advocate of civil liberties and women's rights.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1929, Aloni fought in the *Haganah*, Israel's nascent army, during the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war. Following the creation of Israel, she was head of the major teacher's college.

While studying to obtain her law degree, she began teaching civics in high school and on the radio. Her radio show pushed her to prominence—at one time, a survey revealed that 95 percent of the public was listening to her radio program. The phenomenal popularity made her an unofficial national ombudsman. "I put people on the air whose rights had been abused. Acting as their law-

yer, I persuaded the authorities to amend the legislation in order to correct various injustices. That program had a big impact."

The national popularity she attained through broadcasting and writing attracted her the attention of former Labor Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. After accepting his invitation to join the Labor Party, she became a member of the Knesset in 1965. But she learned that she "was more effective on the radio than in the Knesset." Even her role as minister without portfolio in Yitzhak Rabin's cabinet proved too constraining, and she resigned in 1974.

Since then, Aloni has pursued her political goals at the head of her own party, the Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM). She split from the Labor Party because of its excessive compromises with the religious parties in the coalition. As the sole CRM member in the Knesset, she is currently prepared to cooperate with the Labor Alignment "in order to strengthen the opposition."

CRM voters are a young, well-educated, middle-class constituency, many of whom support the Israeli peace movement.

Theocratic control.

To rule in Israel is to govern by coalition agreement. Since a ruling coalition is an impossibility

without the support of the religious parties, these parties have managed to exert inordinate power over issues as fundamental as marriage, divorce, birth control and religious identity. Since the early '50s, religious MKs (Members of Knesset) have served in the key position of interior minister, from which they have exercised theocratic control over the lives of the secular majority.

For Israeli Jews, only a rabbinical marriage is officially recognized by the state; couples who wish to avoid this imposition must travel to Cyprus to obtain a civil marriage. While Israel recognizes a foreign marriage as legitimate under international law, the couple can still be obliged to go before a rabbinical court for a divorce.

In the rabbinical courts, "a woman is still the property of her husband by law," Aloni points out. "Only he can initiate a divorce." In practical terms, this can mean that if the husband is confined to a mental home or abandons his wife, she cannot remarry for seven years. To challenge women's status as "second-class citizens," Aloni devised a new marriage contract under the

Law of Contracts. The preamble asserts the partners' belief in human rights and sexual equality.

A major battle for Aloni has been the struggle to liberalize Israel's abortion laws. Under the last Labor government, prior to Begin's victory in 1977, a bill was passed legalizing abortion when continuation of the pregnancy could lead to serious social hardship or physical risk. But in 1979, under pressure from the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel party, the conservative Likud government repealed the "social" clause in the abortion law. While the wealthy continue to obtain illegal private abortions relatively easily, the poor must resort, once again, to dangerous backstreet abortionists.

Since the Jewish religion does not deem all abortion illegal, it seems peculiar that such structures prevail. Aloni attributes it to the biblical teaching, "Be fruitful and multiply." With the extreme nationalism of the Begin regime,

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